

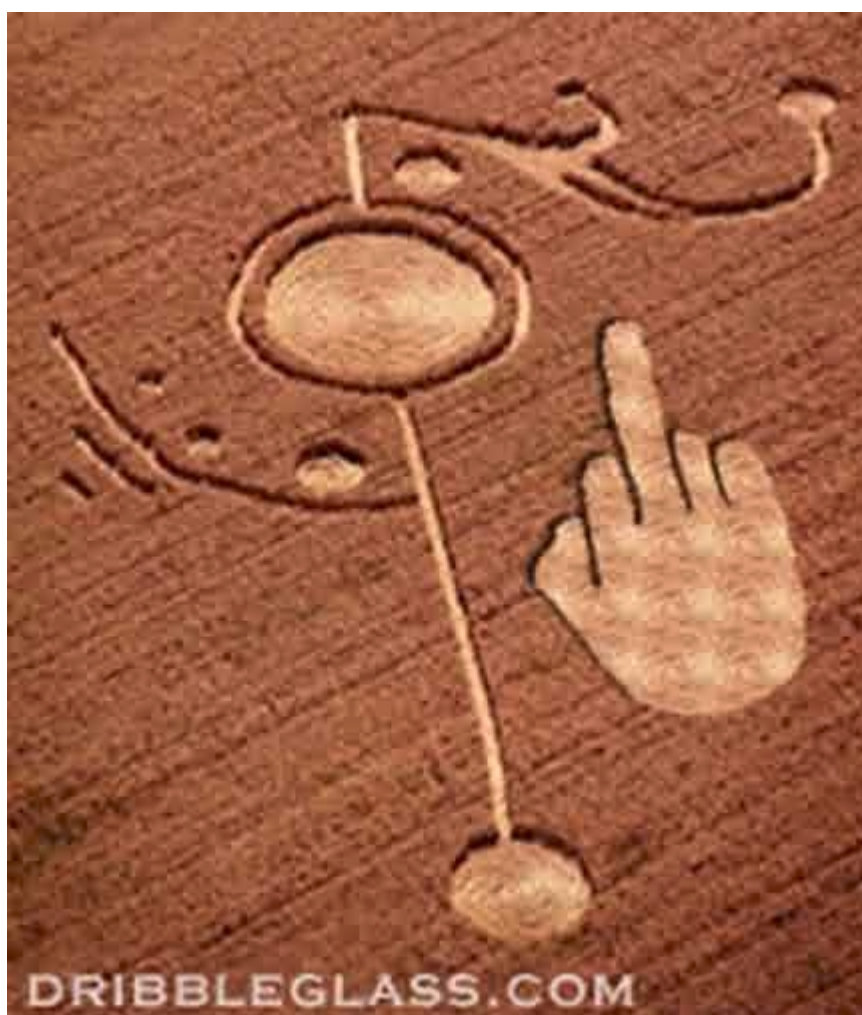
UFO REVIEW

The Truth is, no one's got a clue what the hell is going on.

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Number 3

Crop Circles Created by Hostile Aliens!



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Welcome



At last you should be seeing some changes to the way this magazine presents itself. The first is a more solid and slightly prettier web site from which we can build and expand. One of the principal alterations is that we are moving the News Leads section from the rear of the magazine to the web site itself and we will update this section on a daily basis. It means we can deliver breaking newspaper or magazine articles immediately as opposed to you having to wait a month if you've missed them elsewhere. On that basis then it's worth dropping in each day or every other day just to keep up with what's happening.

We've also finally settled on a means of delivery and for the time being the magazine will be available principally as a PDF download. Of course this option was available to me right from the start but I was never that keen on Acrobat etc. My previous experience of it was that it could be tiresome to download and not very smooth in its delivery. But my worries have been assuaged and I am happy with what is going on. If I wasn't, we'd be doing it another way.

There is also an interesting new offer starting inside this edition. I'd like to have said "exciting new offer" but that's a bit old hat and boring so "interesting" it is. If you look to the left of the screen, one of the buttons you should see will be marked "Purchase Other Magazines". No, stop it, don't press it now. Be patient. What's there is contained in this issue of Review anyway although as I write this, I'm not sure on which page yet. In essence, it is a facility for UK and European readers to buy magazines not easily available here. As you'll see when you get there, we're starting off with **Fate** magazine and we'll introduce and add other publications as time goes on. What profits this may generate will be ploughed back in to UFO Review to fund two further ideas I have, all, needless to say, for the benefit of our readers. Gee, what a fabulous person I am.

Promotion and publicising of the magazine has also, so far, been near non-existent. That will also begin to change quite soon too.

As you may have gathered if you don't live in the UK, some of us over here are pretty sore about the continuing negative treatment Ufology gets in our national press. "It's all over", "It's dead" etc. etc. are all we ever seem to hear. If you then couple this with often inaccurate reporting and stifled rights of reply, then it can get pretty frustrating.

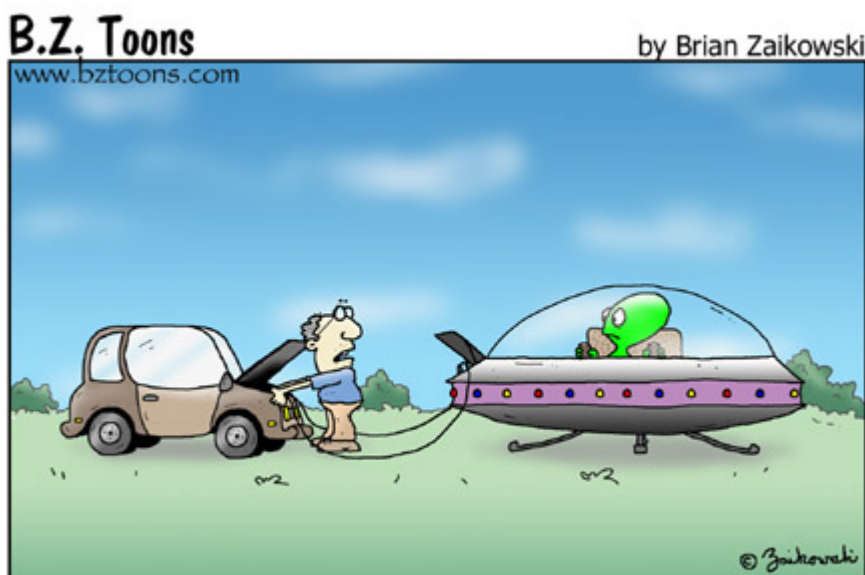
Dr. David Clarke, who, amongst other things is also a journalist in Sheffield, recently put the other side of the argument as seen from the journalist's perspective. I'm paraphrasing just part of his response but in affect, we're all looked upon as loonies. Dodgy so and so's, given to wild exaggeration. And if we're honest, are they wrong?

I suspect the answer is some of the time they're right and some of the time they're not. So what can we do to get a fairer press in the UK? No easy answer, obviously but I suspect the way lies more with individuals than with a collective effort. Graham Birdsall for example had excellent connections with the press and was looked upon as a sound, reliable, levelheaded individual who understood how the media worked. He rarely had to chase them – they came a knocking on his door. So there it is then. We need another Graham.

And while we wait for the next Messiah, what can the rest of us do? Well, some of us could begin acting more responsibly for a start. After the last newspaper "attack" in The Guardian, Joe McGonagle (I'll have to stop mentioning him in this section) wrote a letter to the editor in response to the piece. Not very hard hitting but nevertheless, he made his point. My response to the article? I rang The Guardian up and asked them if they were interested in a story about alien shit! (full story page 57)

So what do I have to say in my defence? Is there a defence? Of course there is. Err, it was a laugh, a joke, we take ourselves too seriously in ufology etc. etc. FYI, I have asked a pal of mine, on the next occasion when I have another "bright" idea, to just gently lead me into a special room in my house that I have had constructed, with a comfortable bed and padding on the walls, and to lock me in for a few hours until I start talking sense again. Could be a long wait in that room.

I am taking a pre-booked holiday from the middle to the end of July. At this moment, I am not sure therefore if there will be an August issue. I will do my best to try and get one out. As usual, watch the usual message boards etc. If not, definitely back in September.



Hey, I'm really sorry. It doesn't look like we are going to get your car started. Do you have a roadside assistance plan?

Mars Tonic



A somewhat futuristic impression of Mac Tonnies

There are countless web sites about Mars and countless pundits who hold themselves up as experts on the planet. Not all of them though get to publish books, at least not books published by one of the largest houses in the world. Simon and Schuster are in the business of making money, something they seem to do quite well, so if their judgement is to give a particular author a platform, then you can assume that that author has something pertinent to say which will be of interest to many. They have given such a platform to Mac Tonnies.

Mac has been running his own web site about the planet for some time now <http://www.mactonnies.com/cydonia.html> , from which he offers considered and insightful opinion on the subject of developmental research and discovery on Mars. Many people have come to value his well thought-out and measured analysis and his reputation has grown significantly over the last few years as someone who can be relied upon for soundness and common sense, a trait that separates him from the more extreme protagonists in the field. He was kind enough to give me some time recently and we spoke at length, not just about the book but also about exactly what's going on up there. This interview took place on June 17th. 2004.

SM: Reading through the introduction to the book, the one key point that seems to stand out in relation to your initial interest was the Face.

MT: Yes, that was the catalyst, although there's more to it than the Face. But it does catch the attention -- which may or may not have been the purpose of making it, if it is in fact made.

SM: When you say it's not the only thing, are you talking about the traces of possible artefacts and other evidence?



The Face

MT: Yes. In the Cydonia region there are other massive objects of the same size and orientation as the Face. They have the same axis of symmetry.

There is circumstantial evidence that maybe the Face is something other than just a geological oddity

Of course you can have geological processes that produce massive objects on the landscape that are oriented in the same direction due to

wind or water or whatever. But there's a certain level of redundancy in Cydonia that's pretty engaging and I think warrants a careful look just in case.

SM: Having jumped straight in, can I take a step back and ask you to tell us a little bit about yourself and your background? Was it in 1998 that you started the web site?

MT: The reason I started the site was because I was on an e-mail mailing list devoted to science and technology issues. There was an opportunity to photograph the Face with the Mars Global Surveyor coming up and I just dropped a note in passing about it on the list, thinking it was interesting. As it was, the photo was never taken. But the reaction was just hugely hostile to even talking about the Face in a scientific context. I had a few people write to me in person and they were very nice and understanding, but as a whole, in public, it was very fashionable to thoroughly flaunt your scepticism. The points made in the counter-arguments were baseless and stupid, but were very acceptable to mainstream thought. It made me mad so I started writing various essays on the subject and that became the modern version of the website.

SM: Clearly your background is in science.

MT: I have a degree in English! I have a writing background. No, I'm not a scientist and don't claim to be one. But I have a big interest in popular science and technology and related matters. I've learned a lot. Science is one of those things where any potential interested party can enter into it in some way. The Face and the subject of artificial structures on Mars is so disdained by the establishment that there aren't many scientists involved with it, and that's one of the points I make in the book. It's sad that a forbidden subject like this has scared people off and instilled a fear of ridicule.

SM: Have you found that that attitude has mellowed slightly over the years or do you still find it as strong as ever?

MT: I think it's probably still as strong as ever, although the number of people involved in objective scientific study of the features has also grown a little bit to counter that sentiment. It's probably best illustrated by a group called the Society For Planetary SETI Research. It's composed of academics in disciplines

like archaeology, digital image processing and epistemology. They're coming at it from different angles and redefining the way we look at the whole issue of extraterrestrial intelligence as it relates to the possible presence of artefacts on Mars.

SM: Presumably from what you've said, you've been faced with a wall of scepticism in the past. If that happened to me, I think I'd try and work out what was going on for those people. Do you think some parts of science are just scared?

MT: I think a little bit of it is fear. NASA has done such a good job of making the issue as confusing as possible. It's an interesting question. They've made the job of getting to the good imagery difficult. When they first re-photographed the Face in '98, it was a horrible image. They photographed it from about a 45-degree angle, through a layer of haze. Moreover, they subjected the image to a high-pass filter. If you look at any computer-imaging book, you find the reason for using such a filter is to suppress detail. That was the image they released to the media. There was absolutely no reason to use that filter and, of course, what it did was make the Face look very flat. It doesn't even look like a three-dimensional feature, which it most emphatically is. It looked almost like a depression in the ground. You can see a little bit of it but it wasn't properly processed. Later that day, they released another version. That was orthorectified: a perfectly legitimate way of getting an image taken from above at an angle and stretching it so it's as if you're looking at it from straight down. It's a useful technique when you're looking at flat features like craters, but the higher the feature is, the more distortion gets worked into the final product. It made the Face look completely lop-sided.

For example, there's a centre line and features that have been called nostrils in the very centre, which is where they should be if the Face is in fact a human representation. But with the orthorectification, NASA shoved the nostrils way over to the side, producing this "Picasso"- looking image that further detracted from a facial resemblance. It looked more face-like than the original high-pass filter image, but it wasn't a huge improvement.

SM: You seem to be implying that all of this was a deliberate attempt to obscure it.

MT: I think it was deliberate, totally. But it's interesting to wonder whether it was disingenuous or part of a cover up. Was it intentional or not? That's an interesting question to me. It seems that the attitude of JPL, who took the photo, was that the Face couldn't possibly be real, they didn't expect it to be anything, and I think the overriding sentiment was, "Let's just kill this issue. It's not worth looking at." And to them that justified meddling a little bit with the image.

SM: I was going to bring this up later on but as we're teetering on the edge of it now, I'll jump in. I will qualify what I'm about to ask you by saying, "Let us descend into the world of fantasy and theory for the moment" but do you believe there is a conspiracy to hide what's up there from us?

MT: If you look at NASA's history, there's this infamous paper called the Brookings Report and it actually talks about the discovery of extraterrestrial artefacts on the Moon and Mars and says, "Hide it".

SM: For the benefit of the readers, could you remind us of the main points about it?

MT: The report basically says that in the future exploration of space, if we discover artefacts left by previous visitors, which is possible, that we keep it a secret. The report proposes that ET artefacts could pose a threat to the scientific community because they would be far in advance of our own and produce a shock to our own research culture and cause apathy -- because if someone else has already discovered all this, it throws the whole technological imperative here on Earth into a "Why bother?" frame of mind. I think that is an incredibly stupid estimation. I think the exact opposite would be true if we discovered hi-tech artefacts. The scientific establishment would be invigorated by it.

The report was looking at the situation based on estimations that Carl Sagan had made. He had mused on extraterrestrial bases, automated observatories based in the solar system, left by visiting intelligences. He predicted that once every 20,000 years we'd be due for a visit from a civilization expanding through the galaxy and that it might be in its best interests to leave something behind to keep an eye on things. That was acceptable science then, but for some reason NASA immediately interpreted that as "Well, if there are artefacts in the solar system and we do find them, they will necessarily be highly advanced technologically."

But it is by no means certain, if artificial, that these artefacts are hi-tech. They could very well be built by an indigenous Martian civilization and be no more advanced technologically than, say, the Egyptian pyramids or something like that. That's been seriously proposed by John Brandenburg, a NASA physicist, and it's called the Cydonian Hypothesis. They may have not have been nearly as sophisticated as we are.

SM: That's a very interesting perspective because whenever we think about extraterrestrial life, we always put it in the context of it being well in advance of our own.

MT: There are some interesting features in England like Silbury Hill and different earthworks and some of the stuff on Mars looks a lot like that. There's a feature called the Tholus that is strategically located in the Cydonia complex; if you showed a black and white picture of it to somebody, they would immediately think it was probably Silbury Hill. It's quite a bit larger but it's possibly the same kind of earthworks engineering.

SM: What about the principle counter argument, that it's all weather formed, that it's natural rock erosion?

MT: When the definitive new images came in showing it from the front, sceptics claimed the Face wasn't symmetrical although it is much more

The implications of a discovery of extraterrestrial life

Recent publicity given to efforts to detect extraterrestrial messages via radio telescope has popularized—and legitimized—speculations about the impact of such a discovery on human values.³³ It is conceivable that there is semi-intelligent life in some part of our solar system or highly intelligent life which is not technologically oriented, and many cosmologists and astronomers think it very likely that there is intelligent life in many other solar systems. While face-to-face meetings with it will not occur within the next 20 years (unless its technology is more advanced than ours, qualifying it to visit Earth), artifacts left at some point in time by these life forms might possibly be discovered through our space activities on the Moon, Mars, or Venus. If there is any contact to be made during the next 20 years it would most likely be by radio—which would indicate that these beings had at least equaled our own technological level.

An individual's reactions to such a radio contact would in part depend on his cultural, religious, and social background, as well as on the actions of those he considered authorities and leaders, and their behavior, in turn would in part depend on their cultural, social, and religious environment.³⁴ The discovery would certainly be front-page news everywhere; the degree of political or social repercussion would probably depend on leadership's interpretation of (1) its own role, (2) threats to that role, and (3) national and personal opportunities to take advantage of the disruption or reinforcement of the attitudes and values of others. Since leadership itself might have great need to gauge the direction and intensity of public attitudes, to strengthen its own morale and for decisionmaking purposes, it would be most advantageous to have more to go on than personal opinions about the opinions of the public and other leadership groups.

The knowledge that life existed in other parts of the universe might lead to a greater unity of men on Earth, based on the "oneness" of man or on the age-old assumption that any stranger is threatening. Much would depend on what, if anything, was communicated between man and the other beings: since after the discovery there will be years of silence (because even the closest stars are several light-years away, an exchange of radio communication would take twice the number of light-years separating our Sun from theirs), the fact that such beings existed might become simply one of the facts of life but probably not one calling for action.³⁵ Whether earthmen would be inspired to all-out space efforts by such a discovery is a moot question. Anthropological files contain many examples of societies, sure of their place in the universe, which have disintegrated when they had to associate with previously unfamiliar societies espousing different ideas and different life ways; others that survived such an experience usually did so by paying the price of changes in values and attitudes and behavior.

Since intelligent life might be discovered at any time via the radio telescope research presently underway, and since the consequences of such a discovery are presently unpredictable because of our limited knowledge of behavior under even an approximation of such dramatic circumstances, two research areas can be recommended—

Footnotes to references will appear at the end of this chapter.

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Continuing studies to determine emotional and intellectual understanding, and attitudes—and successive alterations of them if any—regarding the possibility and consequences of discovering intelligent extraterrestrial life.²⁴ **

→ Historical and empirical studies of the behavior of peoples and their leaders when confronted with dramatic and unfamiliar events or social pressures.²⁵ Such studies might help to provide programs for meeting and adjusting to the implications of such a discovery. Questions one might wish to answer by such studies would include: How might such information, under what circumstances, be presented to or withheld from the public for what ends? What might be the role of the discovering scientists and other decisionmakers regarding release of the fact of discovery?

Implications of man in space

The evolving man-in-space program may already be having its impact on values and attitudes. Given the people involved and the necessary risks in the program, it is likely that there will continue to be value conflicts in various parts of the general public as well as in the groups which must make decisions about the direction and extent of future activities in this area.

The Mercury man-in-space program has already received much comment in the media, which illustrates the kind of conflicts that can be expected. There have been favorable reports, as typified by the articles on the astronauts, their families, and their training.²⁶ There have been unfavorable statements about the "stunt" characteristics of the program and about its apparent tendency to emphasize the glamorous astronauts rather than the scientific and engineering aspects and problems of the project.²⁷ Many commentators have remarked that wives and children are assets to astronauts, who can thus still be considered "normal" Americans; at the same time, their military status permits them to take risks which large portions of the general public might not otherwise consider appropriate for family men. A leading anthropologist who has studied this problem says the astronauts "are not models for other women's husbands—not one little bit * * *". Part of the feeling about space, which spreads right through the country, is women's objection to men going there.²⁸ The actual astronaut launching may highlight the question of a man's responsibility to family versus his willingness to risk death in space. This and similar questions will be resolved, probably not without emotional conflict, according to the particular personal and institutional values held by those involved in various aspects of the controversies.

Here again is an opportunity to conduct before-and-after research on the implications of innovations for attitudes and values. Studies preceding the launching can also provide a basis for better informing the public so that it can realistically appreciate both the accomplishments and difficulties of the program. It is recommended, then, that baseline studies be begun as soon as possible to—

Determine the present knowledge of, beliefs and expectations about, and the values that underlie attitudes toward the Mercury program and the astronauts. These should be continuing studies

symmetrical than any other formation I've seen on Mars. It has a high statistical signature when run through computer programmes testing for fractality, suggesting that it is artificial.

But people claim you can see erosion on the feature and therefore it must be a landform. But if the Face is artificial, we have to take into account the fact that it's inconceivably old and it would have been subjected to the same geological processes that will have affected natural features in the same area. The fact that we see erosion on the Face is no surprise at all. We're talking about an artefact that could have been around for half a million years.

SM: Now you're talking about erosion on the Face and I'm saying that the argument might be that the Face was created by rock erosion and weather patterns in the first place. I suppose the issue I was trying to get at was, are there too many odd shapes up there to make a weather erosion argument viable? Would their very number make that argument too coincidental?

MT: Well, NASA has always relied on the argument that we can see faces wherever we want as long as we try hard enough, and there are other features both on Earth and Mars that also look like faces. But it turns out that the examples they use are pretty flimsy. For example, they use The Old Man On The Mountain in New Hampshire, which collapsed actually last year, but it was a feature that looked like the profile of a human face, like a caricature from a certain angle. But if you moved a few degrees to your left or right then it just completely vanished. You had to be looking at it from just the right way and the Face on Mars differs qualitatively from that. You can look at that from quite a few angles, even from the ground, at it retains a face-like appearance. That mitigates against it being a fluke of geology.

SM: Can I come back to this question I asked a while ago about whether there may be a conspiracy within NASA and try and nail you down to a more specific answer?

MT: It's very hard to say, and I can't say. From where I see it there are of course innumerable conspiracy theories of a more hard-core nature, like you're referring to, wherein NASA knows there might be something more, or highly suspects there is, and is deliberately fobbing off these stupid dismissals to the public. I think it is more of a scholarly cover up. I don't think anyone wants to risk their reputation on the hypothesis that it might be something other than a rock formation. Consequently they have steeped the argument in the "sceptics versus true believers" dichotomy. They've tried to make people who think it might be something other than a natural formation look foolish and incredulous and unscientific. I think it's an academic bias that's manifested in some really bad science, as evidenced by the initial images released to the news media.



(Photo of the Old Man 2000)

SM: I take it as a given that there is life up there, albeit only bacterial.

MT: Oh, I think we'll discover that there are much larger forms of life than just bacterial. I think Mars is more alive than the mainstream view allows.

SM: Well, you just said that with a fair degree of confidence but, and I know we had this joke thing about the rabbit.....

MT: I was very intrigued by the rabbit. I was mad at NASA for dismissing it so eagerly. I thought, "Let's give this things a second look". It turns out that it was a piece of airbag fabric. NASA was a lot more interested in the feature than they let on. While they were busy dismissing it to the public, they were actually busy doing spectroscopic analysis of it. They were curious.

They were much more curious than they wanted people to know. It turns out it was made from exactly the same material as the Vectran fibres that the air bags are made out of. The reason it moved was because it was blowing in the wind. They produced a movie of it on the web and you can see its little antenna wagging in the air. The material was so lightweight that the Martian breeze was able to move it around a little bit.



Mars rabbit

But when I think of Martian life, I'm thinking of features on Mars that Arthur C Clarke has called "banyan trees" -- extremely fractal, organic-looking dark features that look like vegetation. NASA, to my knowledge, has yet to comment on them all. It makes dismissive remarks in relation to other features that are superficially similar to the banyan trees, which it correctly identifies as thawing sand dunes, but it seems to want to confuse the issue a little bit and not directly address the "trees" themselves.

There are other features that are very much like the trees and may be the same phenomenon. NASA has called them "Spiders." They are big, tentacular-looking features that look live nerve ganglia. They look like root systems. They are very organic looking and look alive, although whether they are or not, I don't know. Again, Arthur C. Clarke has gone on the record saying that Mars is teeming and infested with life and that we better watch where we land! He for one is pretty convinced.

He's talking macroscopic life. He's talking big life and one comment he's made about these apparent forests we've discovered on Mars implies that there might be herbivores on the planet.

SM: Biological life?

MT: Well, yes, these forests appear to be biologically alive. In fact there is a Russian team that used a spectroscopic analysis of the Martian atmosphere and detected organic pigments. That strongly suggests the presence of chlorophyll now rather than millions of years ago. That could very readily be from the features that Clarke has mentioned.

SM: Animal life?

MT: Well, the chlorophyll indicates plant life but the presence of plants indicates that there might be something eating those plants and that would be something else, something that we haven't seen yet. It would be too small I would imagine to detect from orbit but there could very well be something gnawing on those plants that we have no idea about.

SM: Is that in terms of animal life as far as you're prepared to go?

MT: Yes. Mars is not an oasis by any means; it's a very harsh planet. But as we learn more about extreme life here on earth it looks more and more plausible that there could be something very tenacious and able to eke out an existence on Mars. We should be prepared to discover an actual ecology that could be quite unearthly in many respects. So I wouldn't rule out animal life. I'm certainly not ruling out plant life. In fact, I think plant life is almost an inevitability at this point.

The ESA is busy taking some really good pictures and their bias towards life is not nearly the same as JPL's, so I'm eager to see what they present. When the Mars Global Surveyor takes pictures of anomalous formations on Mars, the typical reaction is to ignore them. Or, if the public gets interested in them, to offer some vague, lofty dismissal, for whatever reason. The ESA went to Mars to test for life specifically, which NASA has not been prepared to do since the 1970s. When they sent the Viking mission to test for surface microbes, two out of three tests were positive, but the results were studiously ignored, rationalised away as soil chemistry. Occam's Razor would suggest they did in fact find life.

SM: Do you think the public statement, which I remember, might have been different to privately held views at the time?

MT: I think JPL were genuinely surprised by the detection of life. Again, I think this was an anti-life bias. I don't think they expected to find life and were offended when they did. It became number one on their priority to come up with some post hoc explanation as to why this was. The simplest explanation was that microbes were exhaling methane from metabolizing the organic soup that we sent along with the mission. But according to JPL, it was in fact some weird soil chemistry that simulated the process remarkably accurately. Go figure.

SM: Do you ever feel sorry for NASA?

MT: I'm not the only one to say this, but I think it's lost all its vision. I think there are isolated pockets of people within NASA that are genuinely curious -- how could you not be -- but as an institution I think it's failed. It's myopic and bureaucracy-ridden and the people making the important decisions are not making the right decisions. It's committed to a robotic exploration of the solar system. Manned Mars missions are not on the calendar at all.

SM: Despite what Mr. Bush has said?

MT: That was hot air. In fact I think it was a trial balloon. It was a way of testing the waters of public reception. I don't think it was nearly as sincere as

some people thought it was. It rings very hollow. The plan, if you can call it a plan, doesn't have money. If he wanted to sincerely renew our presence in space by sending people back to the Moon and Mars, we should have had a much more intelligible time line and money should have been provided for it.

SM: But you do make some interesting points in the introduction when you refer to this subject when you say that all is not lost if the Americans don't go because the Chinese and the Russians are showing interest.

MT: We're not the only players on the block anymore.

SM: Well, the most likely candidates at the moment judging by the very aggressive way they're going about things, would be the Chinese. Do you think that if a Chinese manned mission to Mars becomes a reality that that might reinvigorate the Americans?

MT: Yes, I do. I think it might instigate a new space race, which we were trying to get away from. The entire reason we went to the moon wasn't out of scientific curiosity but to show the Russians we could do it and that we were technologically superior. When the communist threat faded, so did the manned space programme. The Chinese seem to be taking the necessary steps. They put a person in orbit a couple of years ago, which is a vital first step. But I think they have every intention to keep going, and if they were to send somebody to Mars, I think NASA would feel compelled to beat them to it or at least match their feat in some way. If NASA is going to send someone to Mars, it won't be out of an exploratory spirit. It will be out of a nationalistic competitive spirit.

SM: What other artefacts up on the surface have caught your eye?

MT: In the immediate vicinity of the Face there's a cluster of formations that's collectively known as the City. It's not an actual city in the terrestrial sense. But it does contain a number of anomalies, one of which is a large, five-sided pyramidal formation. Further south is another five-sided pyramidal formation, which is about two, or three times the size of the one in the City area. It's differently oriented yet distinctly faceted. That's interesting from the perspective of wind erosion. If there were prevailing winds scouring into pyramids you'd expect some sort of alignment. In fact you see the same sort of alignment in Elysium. Carl Sagan, ironically enough, first brought attention to that area in his "Cosmos" TV series. There are these three-sided, relatively simple pyramidal shapes and they are aligned but they're produced by wind erosion.

In Cydonia you've got these more complex faceted shapes and they are differently oriented from one another. There's one very tiny pyramid formation that appears to have five sides. Then there's the City pyramid, which is also five sided and shares its alignment with the Face. Then there's the D&M Pyramid, which is extremely large, and its orientation is different from the other two. If it were wind faceted, you'd expect a certain prevalence of orientation among the various pyramids in Cydonia. It would obviously take a very long time to produce effects like that on such a huge scale. Instead you've got the things aimed differently and that implies, although it doesn't prove, that they were

intelligently manufactured. The suspicion among Mars anomaly researchers are they might have been pre-existing landforms that have been modified.

SM: Another point that you've made about the Face is that it has a likeness to the ancient Egyptian period.

MT: The Sphinx-like appearance of the Face could be completely fortuitous. After all, if someone builds a humanoid face out of rock, it's inevitably going to be compared to the Sphinx. It doesn't necessarily mean there's a link of any kind, but at the same time, it's fun to speculate. I spend some time in the book doing just that, in different ways. If nothing else, it's a good illustrative metaphor because you've got the Sphinx here on Earth that was built a long time ago in a desert environment and it exhibits erosion just like the Face on Mars. Perhaps we can learn a little bit about the Face and address it a little more objectively by looking at a well-known example here on earth.

SM: I was curious about the furore regarding the initial images that came through of the Martian landscape from the Landers that are up there now. There was a lot of fuss made about the fact that NASA was mucking about with the colour. Is the Martian atmosphere blue or is it red?

MT: Colour adjustment was an issue with the Viking Landers as well. It's really nothing new. There's an effect called Releigh scattering. If you look at Mars through the Hubble telescope, you can clearly see it's edged with blue. Sometimes it's subtle and sometimes it's quite dramatic. It's due to sunlight scattering in the atmosphere. Some of the images that JPL releases look blood red, like they've been dunked in dye. It just doesn't look natural, it looks completely fake and NASA has come under lots of heat and public concern about the colour calibration issue. I understand that NASA has admitted that getting true colour calibrated images is not the exact science that we'd like to think it is. While the cameras do have colour calibration targets that doesn't mean that you necessarily have to use them.

SM: So people may have been falsely accusing NASA here of meddling when they might simply have just been trying to do their best?

MT: Yes, sure, it doesn't mean that their attempts were disingenuous. Mars is a red planet. The soil is rusty. What's interesting are the independent image analysts on the Net doing the same thing NASA is doing, and producing some very interesting parallel results. I've seen some very good images that show Mars and the sky as not being so violently pink as in the NASA images. But ultimately we're not going to know for sure until we go there in person.

SM: That leads on to the next question. You quote Stephen Hawking as saying that the human race will not survive for the next one thousand years unless it migrates. Do you think we'll end up on Mars?

MT: It's a good simile with computer back ups. When people commit a lot of interesting things to a computer's hard drive, they make a back-up copy. It's the same with planets. We've invested a lot of time and effort here on Earth but we're sitting ducks. If something should happen, we could potentially lose a lot.

The colonising of other planets or other celestial objects or space stations would be like making back-up copies of the human legacy. We've not done that and we've shown no immediate interest in doing so. We'd be doubling our chances of surviving the next one thousand years if we colonised Mars and transplanted our civilisation elsewhere in the solar system and I think it is crucial we do that. Almost every month you hear about some Near Earth Asteroid that has tumbled very closely past our planet, sometimes just slightly farther away than our moon. We've been to our moon; it's not very far away at all. It's a three-day trip using 1960s technology. The asteroid threat weighs on me a little bit. It's very nagging and very disturbing, especially as we don't have any asteroid protection system in place. One of the only instruments that might have been able to help us is the Hubble telescope and it's been proposed that we let it die and fall out of orbit and burn up.

SM: Aren't they now reconsidering that?

MT: Yes, they are. There was enough public outcry from all over the world that NASA is now talking about sending a robot to affect the repairs. But even that has its critics because the robotic mission would constantly be relying on technologies that might not work. We should send humans to repair it instead. But because of Columbia, we are very reluctant to do anything right now. I think the Hubble space telescope was one of the defining technological endeavours of the human race. It's a brilliant piece of hardware, a real testament to our species that we can put a telescope in orbit. It's told us so much and it's continuing to tell us interesting things. Perhaps vitally interesting things, so there is really no surprise at people's reactions.

SM: Can I turn my attention to the book itself? Could you run through an outline, an overall view?

MT: The general argument that suffuses the entire book is that the Face on Mars is not pseudoscience, as many self-proclaimed sceptics and debunkers like to maintain. On the other hand, it's not proven either. The point I try to highlight is that it's testable science and that we shouldn't be afraid to speculate and imagine about it. Ultimately it's all testable and that's what science is all about. We don't have to just endlessly daydream about it. We can actually put our ideas to the test by going there and visiting and finding out what it is. Until we do that, I think we need to be considering some radical interpretations because it violently upsets the paradigm right now as far as the search for extraterrestrial intelligence is concerned.

The general view allows for intelligent extraterrestrials as long as they're light years away and can't possibly get to us and the Face just topples that whole notion. If the Martians were from another star system, then the evidence on Mars suggests they were capable of getting here from there, wherever "there" is. So in that sense it's vital we examine the Face and as many objects on Mars as possible so that we can figure out what it's telling us what we know and what we don't know about extraterrestrial intelligence.

The book is a springboard for thinking about the whole issue in general from different angles. I think the intellectual debate about ETI has reached a cul-de-sac. You have the hard-core radio-SETI theorists in one corner, proclaiming that

the aliens will rely on radio signals and so on, and then you have a kind of semi-lunatic fringe on the other hand saying that they're already here, and finally there's the incredibly incredulous gang. This book seeks to find a middle ground where the ideas make sense.

SM: A brilliant concept that hopefully will bring some clarity to a muddled and confused area.

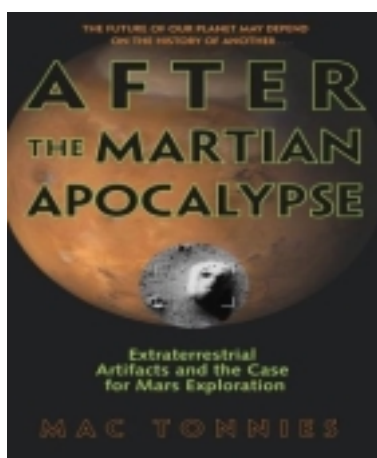
MT: Oh, it's totally muddled because no one likes to think about it. Mainstream SETI is very elitist and steeped in outdated dogma. I think that is changing a little bit but they're still not accepting anything else. But the fact remains that the UFO phenomenon has produced vastly more evidence in favour of non-human intelligence than radio SETI has ever produced. Yet they continue to mock and ridicule anyone who has even a passing interest in UFOs. It's the same thing with the Face on Mars. It's become a forbidden topic.

SM: You don't sound like a Seth Shostak fan.

MT: It's not that I don't support SETI; I think we should be doing it. It's just that there's this prevailing notion that the search for radio signals from deep space and the search for physical, tangible anomalies on planetary surfaces are mutually incompatible. I don't think that is true at all. SETI wants all the attention in its particular sphere of expertise and they're not willing to concede that there might be more to the debate than radio signals. If you're looking for intelligence, you're looking for testable evidence of someone trying to say something. To me, I don't see any difference between possible encoded messages on the surface of Mars and receiving a string of prime numbers from deep space through a radio telescope.

The book is probably going to make some people mad because it tears into the subculture of wild-eyed belief, but it also rips into mainstream acceptable thought on how extraterrestrials will manifest their intelligence, if they are indeed out there. It doesn't take sides with either group. It argues for a renaissance in thinking about the whole issue and it uses the Face as a starting point for that.

SM: Mac, thank you.



Mac's book is extremely competitively priced on Amazon at £6.86. It is not published in the UK. The link below should work although it doesn't on my computer, but that's because ever since I went to Broadband, my server hasn't taken kindly to Amazon.

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/search-handle-form/202-8870417-7543863>



The Aliens

Two aliens landed in the Arizona desert near an abandoned gas station. They approached one of the gas pumps, and one of the aliens addressed it.

"Greetings, Earthling. We come in peace. Take us to your leader."

The gas pumps of course, didn't respond. The alien repeated the greeting. Again there was no response. The alien, annoyed by what he perceived to be the gas pumps haughty attitude, drew his ray gun, and said impatiently, "Greetings earthling. We come in peace. How dare you ignore us in this way! Take us to your leader, or I'll fire!"

The other alien shouted to his comrade, "No, you don't want to make him mad!" But before he finished his warning, the first alien fired.

There was a huge explosion that blew both of them 200 meters into the desert, where they landed in a heap rather abruptly. When they finally regained consciousness, the one who fired turned to the other one and said, "What a ferocious creature. It damn near killed us! How did you know it was so dangerous?"

The other alien answered, "If there's one thing I've learned during my travels through the galaxy, when a guy has a penis he can wrap around himself twice and then stick it in his own ear, you don't mess with him."



Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus: So Where Does That Leave Ufology?

by
Sheryl Gottschall

About the author:

I developed an interest in the UFO subject during a 3-year bible study course. (When I began to interpret some of the angelic visitations described in biblical scriptures to more closely resemble ET contact).

I have been an active UFO researcher since 1988 and am currently public relations officer for UFO Research Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. I guest on the weekly Paranormal Panel show on Radio 4BC.

I am by profession a clinical hypnotherapist and since 1992, I have worked closely with and facilitated support groups for experiencers. I am more interested in the human response to the ET subject than the ETs themselves. The focus of my passion is to understand what it might mean for all of us to become cosmic citizens and part of a wider galactic community.

Have you noticed that the UFO field is dominated by testosterone?

Traditionally, men have held the commanding influence in this field of research but I have often wondered how Ufology would change if more women became actively involved. Would women take the same path, explore the same issues, demonstrate the same values or respond to the same influences? I think not. Today's Ufology is unbalanced and I cannot help but feel that besides the complex nature of this phenomenon it is also hindered by the male mindset and worldview.

The influence of males dominating Ufology dates right back to the 1940s where we see, even then, the contactee movement mostly consisting of men, with the amount of women who went public with their contactee accounts being counted on one hand. Many of the people who have taken up the banner of Ufology since that time have been men. Why is this so? This could have been due to signs of the times and the legacy from the pre-suffragette movement, the nature of the UFO phenomenon itself or the strong desire for those who studied Ufology to appear to approach it scientifically, thereby attracting more of the male gender. One can only guess but I do favour the latter explanation. Since that time this pervasion has perpetuated but it may now be time for the opposite swing of the pendulum.

Taking on the scientific approach to Ufology requires one to focus on the hard facts leaving the "soft evidence" and "the esoteric" to quietly slip into the

night, and isn't this approach precisely what has persisted in this field so far? UFO research now struggles with the fallout of this trend, that is, contending with the integration of reductionist thinking and esoteric principles which the UFO phenomenon itself demands if we are to make any progress towards a greater understanding of it. Although the esoteric aspects of Ufology have traditionally been denied (there are the exceptions) by men wanting to present scientific credibility, it would be unfair of me not to bring to the reader's attention the recent slight, yet noticeable, shift in Ufology brought about by the emerging influence of the New Age movement led by women. We see the reflection of this influence, now slowly impinging on the UFO field, in some of the ideas Ufology is now willing to entertain. This new cultural environment has aided tremendously in supporting tentative steps away from the traditional male oriented "nuts and bolts" approach of UFO research towards a more lateral viewpoint which may have the potential to bring us closer to the "truth" about the UFO phenomenon. This demonstrates, at least in my view, that the impact of female consciousness can affect our focus and does make a difference. Consequently, the importance of keeping a balance of input from the strengths of both men and women in UFO research is revealed.

In order to regain the balance here, Ufology needs to overcome the challenge of attracting more input from women by firstly dismantling those invisible and mostly unintentional, "not welcome signs" that are subtly hung over this area of research. Most male ufologists will have no idea of what I am referring to here but make no mistake, they do exist. In any gender-dominated environment e.g., wrecking yard, lingerie shop, one can gain a sense or feeling of invisible walls. If you happen to be the less dominant gender and wander into the dominant gender's world, you will probably develop the feeling of wanting to leave very quickly. We have all had this experience at times and it demonstrates that in any unbalanced environment we can sense those invisible walls, even though we may be consciously unaware of them.

To prove my point further and relate it to Ufology, one cannot fail to notice the proportion of men to women who speak at UFO conferences, author UFO research articles, chair or preside over UFO organizations, or who simply do the chatting on UFO email lists. To be fair, women have not been discouraged from participating in these areas but they have not been encouraged either. One cannot help but wonder what may happen if they were, or where that may lead Ufology in the future. If men and women combined their strengths in the UFO endeavour it may offer a more balanced approach in researching this enigmatic phenomenon.

As Dr John Gray states in his seminal book, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, life on Mars and Venus are quite different with the focus of both seeming to be opposite, but in truth are complimentary. Typically Martians (men) focus on things and objects, which manifests in initiative, activity and power while Venusians (women) focus on people and feelings, which manifests in stillness, receptivity (intuition) and insight. It would not be untrue to say that in the past the Martian focus on objects has taken precedence in Ufology keeping any advancement towards deriving any meaning from it. Even the name change by many UFO organizations to include the term UFO rather than the word alien is a reflection of the turn away from the Venusian focus on

people or living beings. In truth, it would have served Ufology better if UFO organisations had included the term "Alien" in their titles. At least this would not have caused the same depotentiating effect as the term UFO which now diffuses what Ufology is really about, that is, extraterrestrial life not unidentified flying objects.

Although the male and female points of view are quite different, combining the strengths of these two perspectives in the UFO movement may provide the potential for a deeper understanding that takes us somewhere other than into more confusion. There is no doubt that men and women have distinctive roles to play in the world and the UFO community could be well served by combining the talents of the two to maintain a balanced approach to the study of UFOs.

UFOLOGY DEAD !!!!!!!!!!!

BODY FOUND IN ALLEYWAY BEHIND TESCOS

POLICE ISSUE DISCRIPTION OF MAN THEY'D LIKE TO TALK TO

By Dam Acne

Ufology was found dead yesterday behind a Tesco's superstore in London. A post mortem is taking place this morning but a police spokesman was quoted as saying, "It looks fairly straight forward. We know a couple of journalists are involved. We are talking to one and want to talk to another. It looks like a smothering."

He went on, "We all know ufology has taken a bit of a hammering recently. His viability has frequently been called into question and this has caused unrest among some of his followers. We think he might have been the victim of a campaign of "Lazy Journalism" and we need to get to the bottom of it."

Although the police are looking for two journalists, your reporter has found out that a note was found next to the body. It apparently read as follows:

"There's not much point in going on. No one takes me seriously anymore and my credibility is shot. I just don't understand it. It's as clear as anything that I'm real but people just seemed frightened or scared of me and make fun. I can't take it anymore."

Our Science correspondent Professor Dam Acne writes; "Lazy Journalism" is a virulent form of mental disease that usually affects those that write for a living. It attacks the brain in a particularly pernicious manner and is often professionally fatal, although sufferers can "get away with it" for years before finally succumbing. It is usually drawn towards those that are arrogant or just plain thick."

Chris Rolfe is 19.

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We are pleased to announce a new service we are offering for the benefit of our readers. We have come to an arrangement with the publishers of **FATE** magazine in the States to offer you the magazine here, in the UK, direct from us at UFO Review. No need to send money off to America, no need to commit to buy every issue. Buy when and if you want to. We hold stock and delivery to you is "instant", making allowances of course for the vagaries of the UK postal service (and it's not very good round my way at the moment).

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And what's more, you won't be paying through the nose for this privilege either. If you care to check up on the retail or subscription prices of the magazine in the States, you will see that we are competitive and are actually cheaper, believe it or not, when you consider the fact that our quoted prices include UK delivery. What a deal. We must be mad etc. etc.

We are in negotiation with other publishers at the moment as well and gradually the range of magazines that we offer will increase and expand. But we aren't going to go bonkers. We are looking for quality and reliability and there will be a certain exclusivity about what we take on. We don't see the point of offering you something that is poorly written or is published irregularly. The keywords in our decision making process will be reputation and quality. If you have suggestions, then please contact us at stuart@uforeview.net.

Let's deal with the nasty business first. There's nothing worse than dragging through promotions like this as they spiel on and on when all you really want to know is, what the heck is it going to cost me?

UK price £3.65 per issue. That includes postage (second class) and packing. U.S. retail price is approximately £3.30. In calculating prices, we have taken a pessimistic rate of exchange so as to avoid constant price variation on an issue-to-issue basis.

For those who have never heard of **FATE** Magazine before, or for those who know very little about it, there follows an explanation and some historical background on the publication. As you will see, it's been around for a while, and that's a little bit of an understatement. There is a more detailed breakdown of pricing at the end of the article. European customers are catered for as well.

We will keep unsold issues and offer them as a back issue service. We have not worked out an arrangement with the publishers for back issues before the start of this arrangement. If there is an interest, we will make enquiries.

The first issue to be offered will be the current one, July 2004.



TRUE REPORTS OF THE STRANGE AND UNKNOWN



Meet the staff



Front Row: Nancy Gluth, Phyllis Galde, Kathy Ritacco, Angela Friesen
 Back Row: John Zupansic, Diane Coulson, Andrew Honigman, David Godwin

1948 **History of FATE** 2004

Long before man walked on the moon, FATE magazine was bringing readers to worlds strange and unknown. FATE first hit newsstands in the spring of 1948. Co-founded by Ray Palmer, Editor of the venerable Amazing Stories magazine, and Curtis Fuller, an accomplished Editor in his own right, the magazine's inaugural edition featured an article by Kenneth Arnold, who recounted in it his amazing UFO encounter in 1947. Arnold's sighting marked the beginning of the modern UFO era, and his story propelled the fledgling FATE to national recognition.

Curtis Fuller and his wife Mary took full control of FATE in 1955, when Palmer sold his interest in the publication. The Fullers expanded the magazine's focus, and increased readership to well over 100,000 subscribers. They continued to publish FATE until 1988, when the magazine was sold to Llewellyn Publications. In his farewell column, Curtis Fuller wrote, "Our purpose throughout this long time has been to explore and to report honestly the strangest facts of this strange world - the ones that don't fit into the general beliefs of the way things are."

FATE underwent a facelift in 1994, when Llewellyn decided to change it from digest size to a full-size, full-color magazine. Four years later in 1998, the magazine celebrated its 50th year of publication. When asked to comment on how a magazine like FATE had beaten the odds and survived through five decades, Carl Llewellyn Weschcke said, "No product, especially a magazine, can stay around for fifty years unless it meets a need. FATE recognizes that the impossible can be possible; we explore the unknown so that it can be known."

September of 2001 marked the beginning of a new era for the long-running magazine, as Phyllis Galde, Editor-in-Chief, took over publication. Galde has continued FATE's fine traditions of objective reporting of unusual events and active reader involvement in shaping the content of the magazine. And in this spirit of continuing FATE's long-standing traditions, in May of 2003 FATE returned to its original digest size.

From personal accounts of ghosts and UFOs, to scientific examination of psychic phenomena and earth mysteries, FATE's main purpose continues to be honest reporting and open discussion of the strange and unknown.

Psychic Phenomena: Recent Fortean Phenomena: Life After Death: Healing: Ghosts and Hauntings: Scientific Breakthroughs: UFO Occurrences: How-To: Sacred, Mystic, and Historic Sites: Alternative Spirituality

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Latest issue July 2004



An Audio Archive of UFO History

Elevation to Sainthood is not something most of us expect to happen after we pass on. It just might happen to Wendy Connors though when she physically departs this mortal coil but if not, she'll be on the next rung down. And why? Because when the great day comes and we finally are told that there are indeed strange little creatures that exist elsewhere and they're coming here to try a double cheeseburger, then after the dust has settled a curiosity will ensue. How did it all start? What were the first clues? Who were the main players? What were the major events? It is at that point that Wendy's memory will be wheeled out, dusted down, and those interested will come and prostrate themselves before her, overflowing with gratitude and thanks.

It is now the fashion for those institutions and publications that have served ufology for a while to recognise the bounty that exists in their archives. They are being dusted down, given the modern treatment, and chucked back out at the public as valuable historical material. Everyone's at it and indeed, why not? After all, they're interesting. OK. I'm guilty of massive understatement. They're fascinating. FSR, Magonia, BUFORA, and NICAPS' records via Dick Hall are all finding their way onto the market place. If there is a limiting factor in what they produce it is not a restrictive one in the sense that there isn't a breadth of material, but that the material comes just from what these publications and institutions have published previously themselves.

The difference between what the above are doing and what Wendy is doing is that she's never published anything before, or at least not a magazine. And neither is it in the printed word form. Wendy's efforts involve sound. Wendy let's you listen to original history.

Faded Discs (<http://www.fadeddiscs.com/>) is an undoubted labour of love and amazing commitment. If you knew how hard Wendy worked at this, you'd weep. In fact, in a few minutes you'll find out. Her goal? To bring back to life recordings of historical figures and events in Ufology. But why am I telling you this? Why don't I let the lady concerned explain it far more clearly, in her own words.

The following interview took place on Monday, June 7th 2004 at 4:30 pm BST.

SM: Hi Wendy. Sorry I'm a few minutes late.



Wendy Connors

WC: No problem at all.

SM: Well firstly, thank you very much for giving me this interview Wendy. It's very much appreciated. Am I right in thinking you're in Albuquerque, is that right?

WC: Yes.

SM: And are you there because of health reasons? Is it because of the air?

WC: Well, the air is pretty clean; we're a mile up in the air. I'm a brutal asthmatic and I suffer from the onset of emphysema, so being down here in the dry air helps a lot.

SM: Where did you move from?

WC: I originally came from Iowa.

SM: That's a very rural State, is it not?

WC: Well actually, most of it is but on the eastern side, right along the Mississippi it's pretty much industrial. And that's where I grew up, along the Mississippi, in a community that was both rural and industrial. So the best of both worlds.

SM: How long have you been in Albuquerque now?

WC: Oh my gosh. I've lived in New Mexico since 1980. About 10 more years and I can be considered a native!

SM: Before you started the project of Faded Discs, how had you been involved in ufology before then?

WC: We're going to have to go way back. I came into the world before the flying discs, so I'm getting up there in years. I'm a pretty reclusive person. I got interested, of course, as a young person and as the years went by, I did my own

private research for many, many years. I did some interesting things. I was the one that brought out "Air Force Regulation 200-2" and gave that to my friend Frank Edwards. Some people call me the hidden gem within ufology. I don't really know what that means.

SM: I think it means you keep a very low profile.

WC: Most of the time I do, yeah. Over the years I slowly did my work and it finally got to the point where I realised that Ufology was getting quite large. It was almost impossible to maintain a generalist position within the field of Ufology, so I decided it was time to start specialising. My first area of specialisation was trying to find out exactly how the Air Force investigated the phenomena, who was behind it, and so on.

SM: Did you ever come to any conclusions about that?

WC: Oh my goodness, you mean is there a great, grand conspiracy? No! Actually the conclusion I came to was that at the very beginning under Project Sign, Ufology was taken extremely seriously and a lot of people put their careers and that on the line when they finally said that, "Hey, the only logical, rational, analytical answer is that these things are not from here."

Now they never went into an extraterrestrial hypothesis nor did they go into the Inter Dimensional or Time theories. It's just that these things are beyond our current technology and the only logical explanation is that they are not from here. It got an awful lot of people in trouble and a lot of people don't realise that back then, the people that were doing this like Colonel McCoy and Alfred C. Loedding, these were the cream of the crop in the military. These were no nonsense individuals, highly educated, their skills were beyond reproach and they lived hard and they worked hard. It was kind of a shame, they were dismissed and Project Grudge was put into place to boost the philosophy of flying saucers to the public and that it was nonsense.

After that, you could consider the whole thing, according to the Air force, as just being hogwash and they weren't going to be real serious about it. But I believe they were serious about it in some of the darker corners. I'm sure a few of them kept an eye out just in case, because that's how the military actually operate. They may not pay too much attention to certain things on the surface but they also have a tendency to keep a couple of people in the background with their eyes open and their ears to the ground, just in case, so there will be no surprises on the horizon. I think that's where the investigation of UFOs went. I think it was taken out of the military hands and probably placed, probably not in the CIA, but probably just some little corner of the government, what we call the real government, the 30 year people who are not elected, and they are probably the ones that keep an eye on the phenomena itself.

SM: You sound like you're saying, without using the name, MJ12, or something similar.

WC: Yes, except that I'm not sure the MJ documents are real.

SM: Yes, that in itself is a separate issue and I share your doubts about that, but in the sense that there are a group of individuals somewhere who, to use your phrase, are keeping an eye on the whole thing – you think that's almost certain?

WC: Oh, I truly believe that.

SM: Just out of interest, the names that have been bandied about in the past as allegedly being members of MJ 12, do you think those people might be in the sort of group you're thinking of?

WC: No, not at all. I believe that most of the people that were scientists really poo poo'd it and they really didn't want anything to do with it and the Robinson Panel kind of proved that. I don't think science was willing to take a chance to really look at it. So the gathering of big brains and the Brain Trust and the scientific community, well how could they come up with a definitive that doesn't exist in two hours? I've spent 50 years at this and I know an awful lot. But the amount of material I don't know would bury Mount Everest. So I think I have to agree with Dr. McDonald that Science has been in default, has remained in default and probably the phenomena is too important to just leave to the scientific community.

SM: I find that an interesting analysis. Ok, the science community in general, with some exceptions, have not been prepared in the past to take a chance. But do you think that government employed scientists or military employed scientists have been instructed to take a look at it?

WC: Probably, but I doubt that seriously if there would be a written record. If you go back in the history, and I'm not really a Ufologist – I'm an historian more than anything, but the flying disc came on the scene during WW2 and we know that certain people looked into it but because of the massive amount of war materials and fighting going on, they didn't have a long enough time to look deep into things.

So I think some of the material such as the Foo Fighters was filed away with the thought that we will look at this when things are much easier and the war is over and we can go back and look through everything and gain an historical perspective of what went on. Because in the heat of battle, no one really pays attention to exactly what is going on.

SM: But they never really did or if they did, they certainly kept it quiet. I've never read any definitive explanation of what Foo Fighters were and for that matter, I've never read a definitive explanation of the Ghost Rockets.

WC: Right, but they were looked at. We have the documentation that they were considered, but not at any great depth.

SM: Right, so maybe no conclusion was come to or if there was, it certainly wasn't publicised and the matter was put aside and historically forgotten about.

WC: Yes, it became historically benign, more or less, because we went from WW2 immediately right in to the Cold War and such things as unexplained phenomena, even in war time, was not a top priority to anyone, whether it was the scientific community or the military establishment itself. But it was there, it was buried and a lot of stuff was burned and destroyed. I took a trip to Wright Patterson AFB 5 or 6 years ago when Mike Hall and I were preparing the books on Alfred Loedding and Edward Ruppelt. And believe it or not, under the golf course at Wright Patterson AFB was buried about 120 metric tonnes of documentation.

SM: Buried or just stored?

WC: No, it was buried, it was thrown away. It was a landfill and they filled it in with all the papers and then they built a golf course on top of it. You can imagine the amount of material that is gone, forever.

SM: That's criminal vandalism. It's removing important historical data.

WC: Back in those days though, you didn't have the number of historians or the time or the resources to employ them to go through everything and take out the cream of the crop that really explained a lot of things. Most of the people were just lower basic airmen who just pulled things out of a file, threw them in boxes, and it then it got shipped off to the landfill. It's a crime as far as I'm concerned but I understand why they did that, due to space allocations. I was talking to one retired colonel who said, "You know? I had a very small office and my 12 file cabinets would fill up. I would get a memo that would say ""Clean out 3 linear feet of your files every 6 months"" and what he would do is, he would just go over and pick at random and clean things out and send them off for destruction.

SM: Just listening to you say that, well, I know we're talking with the benefit of hindsight but it sounds like a tragedy.

WC: Oh it is. I rank it right up there with the proverbial destruction of the Library of Alexandria.

SM: What gave you the idea for Faded Discs?

WC: Well, as I explained, I decided to specialise on Project Sign and tried to figure out who was behind it and how it was organised. Mike Hall and I wrote two books, one was "Alfred C. Loedding and The Great Flying Saucer Wave of 1947" and the other was "Captain Edward J. Ruppelt; Summer of The Saucers 1952". Those two books pretty much completed that particular aspect of my specialised research in there.

One day I was tootling along trying to figure what I should start on next. I looked at abductions and other things and it finally dawned on me. We have a great written history in Ufology but we don't have an audio history of ufology.

So I went to visit some friends. I went to see Richard Hall and absconded with all the tapes he had. And some of the old timers in Ufology started sending me

theirs, Ray Fowler, Mark Canduso, Richard Lee, a multitude of the older names in Ufology that nobody remembers anymore.

I got a hold of their collections of audios, which numbered about a thousand in total. I thought, "When you read a book dealing with some aspect of Ufology, it's kind of cut and dry. But if you actually hear the person, it makes the written word much more meaningful because you get the inflection of what the person was talking about, or what they might have believed." I was looking also at our younger generation today, who are more into the multimedia aspect of things than just the book. They want to read the book and then they want to go see the movie. They want a DVD or a CD of the event. And so I decided that my next undertaking before I kick off from this world would be to try to get all of these audios digitised and cleaned up as best as possible using software. Edit out all of the pops and the extremely long pauses and really tighten it up without losing the context of what the person is saying. Then to put them into some kind of groupings for example High Strangeness, dealing with the Flatwoods Monster and the Canadian search for flying saucers under Project Magnet and so on.

But my first effort was to put out a primer. It was just a general primer of Ufology from 1938 to 1959 that researchers could use at their computer while doing their research so they could actually listen. Let's say for example they are reading and writing about a case, they can also be listening to the actual person who was involved in the case. And it will give them more of a personal in depth look at what it is they're researching. I started doing that and wondered what to call it and thought that the recordings are kind of rare and a lot of them have been destroyed or were in really bad condition, so I just called them Faded Discs.

SM: When I look at your web site and I look at all the different tracks, we're talking about well over a hundred, easily, it sounds like a monumental effort to have pulled it all together. It must have involved a lot of phone calls, a lot of writing, a lot of calling in favours. Is that accurate?

WC: Oh yes. Trying to dig up some of the old timers was very difficult. And to just to ask them if they had any recordings and I'd get, "Oh Gosh, well I've moved and we sent those to the landfill. But let me dig around. Maybe I have a few in my dresser draw." Pretty soon people would start sending them to me. It's got so massive now, and I'm only one person, that I am probably only 15% into what is available. There is just that much material.

SM: When you say "available" do you mean material you actually have but haven't been able to process yet?

WC: What I mean is I've completed about 15% of the material available and what I mean by completing it is restoring it and preserving it and digitising it and putting it on CD.

SM: I get the feeling that your work is probably not going to be truly appreciated until some point in the future when people suddenly wake up and realise what you've done, and the marvellous jewel that you will have left

behind for people. Maybe people are appreciative now but that there will be a broader spectrum of appreciation in year to come.

WC: I would hope so. But I don't kid myself about it. What I do is very time consuming, very intense, and I work at it 12 to 13 hours a day, 7 days a week. I rarely take breaks. I do it because I enjoy it and because I am discovering Ufology from a perspective I really didn't know or truly appreciate at the time.

I truly believe that in the future, First Contact will come. And what I mean by First Contact is we will either, in our space exploration, bump in to a sentient being or we will be contacted in such a way that there really will be no doubt in anyone's mind on this planet. That's going to come. It may be a billion years from now, and if our human kind, Homo Sapiens continue to evolve and exist and go to other parts of the galaxy, eventually First Contact is going to be made.

And when that happens, then I hope that a thousand generations from now will look back and say, "Wow, here is the audio history of the search". And in my grave I'll have a big smile. So I'm doing it for future generations and I'm glad that so many researchers today are starting to catch on to what I'm doing and donating material for the discs, because it is very expensive.

SM: You were saying that you expect First Contact to come at some time in the future. I take it then from that remark that you don't believe for example that the American government has already made contact?

WC: Well, I'm not actually saying that. I believe that contact has probably been made. I would think the odds tilt towards that. But I'm talking about universal contact, where we all know it. It's not hidden behind layers of mist to where it's the privileged few who know about crashed discs and bodies and things like that.

SM: Any ideas why it's been kept from us if indeed it has taken place?

WC: Well I can fall back on the old standard whereby it would probably upset us economically, our religions would go through a tremendous time.

But I've never really bought into that. I think it would be the greatest thing in the world, if it were to be announced, either by the United Nations or from the steps of the White House, wherever it comes from, that we're not alone and that we have nothing to fear and much to learn. I think our religions and other institutions would adapt. Let's say that an alien lands on the proverbial White House Lawn, How could that destroy the main religions of the world? The fact is, if there is a Creator and he created us, then we're just looking at another creation from the Creator. Nothing has really changed.

SM: I agree with you but I also think that people like yourself are intellectually in a different place with this subject compared to the average person. Not only would you welcome First Contact or public revelation of it, it would be the pinnacle of your personal and professional life as well, as it would be with me. But to the average person, who probably doesn't think about it very often

except maybe when he's watching a TV programme, to suddenly be confronted with the fact that we are not alone, and with our inbuilt arrogance that we are the centre of the Universe and that we're the only intelligent beings ever etc. etc., it would be quite a challenge.

I would expect social chaos to result. I would think the suicide rate would absolutely shoot up for example and I don't think you could release information like that without there being some affect.

WC: I agree. But if we look back in history, at Copernicus for example, you bring forth a concept or a new theory and the world hates you for it because you have invaded everyone else's nooks and crannies in which they felt superior within. But if First Contact comes, I don't think we're going to have mass hysteria because the younger generation today are adapted to the Sci Fi image of things.

SM: Do you believe young people are being primed to be mentally prepared?

WC: No, not from a conspiratorial standpoint. I think every generation has grabbed on the fanciful "What Might Be" especially just prior to WW2. I think when it comes, I think there will be some chaos of course but getting back to Copernicus, I think anything new that challenges the central position of Man and where he belongs in the Cosmos, whenever there's a change like that, everybody has to be grabbed by the scruff of the neck and pulled along until they become comfortable with it. And I don't think it would take very long for people to become comfortable with it providing it's obviously a peaceful gesture and we're not going to be invaded and they're not going to all resettle here in the billions. If they just want to share knowledge and perhaps help us along and explore the mysteries of the Cosmos then I think most would be quite happy.

It would change us in many ways and more for the better than the negative. Initially there would be some negativity. I can imagine poor Phil Klass's having heart attacks.

SM: We shouldn't laugh.

WC: Well, Phil and I have gone around the monkey barrel several times and we remain friends, even though we were at each other's throats for quite a number of years.

SM: I suppose it's the fear of the unknown. And listening to you, you take a benign approach. It's almost as if your expectations are that when First Contact comes, it will be benign, it will be friendly, it will be positive, it will be helpful.

But in many ways, that's the cliché that some people try to shake us out of and maybe we shouldn't look for saviour from a more advanced species and that whoever turns up may not be benign and maybe negative.

WC: I agree that that is a possibility but it seems to me that any sentient being that has an economy, produces and explores science and can make the trip, whether its folding the fabric of space or travelling at a million times the speed of light, then I really don't think they would come for conquest. By the time I see sentient beings at that point, they would be more intent on learning and exploring without imposing manifest destiny.

SM: I agree. I think any society that could develop itself to the point where it can partake in interstellar travel by whatever means, if it's developed to that point then I also suspect it would have developed itself to the point of having removed the more aggressive side to its nature.

WC: I also believe though that they would also be capable of protecting themselves.

SM: Then why do UFOs crash?

WC: UFO's crash because UFOs are probably not living things and anything built by sentient beings will be prone to crash or malfunction once in a while, no matter how great your science.

SM: Do you have, within the published archives of Faded Discs any particular favourite tracks?

WC: Oh! They're all favourites.

SM: Well let me rephrase that slightly. Are there any there that when you first got hold of them and first played them and first heard them, made your heart leap into your mouth?

WC: Oh yes. But they're not favourites. But for example I'm currently working on a new compilation dealing with alien abduction from 1957 to 1975 and lo and behold, at about 2:00 this morning I was listening to a tape that had been laying here for several years and you could barely hear it so I made a few adjustments and by golly, it's Carol Wayne Watts talking about his abduction in 1968. Of course my heart leapt into my mouth a bit because although that abduction is considered a hoax, we have it. We have Carol Watts' voice on tape so it's no longer a line in the literature or the database.

SM: That sentence that you've just said could sum up Faded Discs in its entirety. It's there, you can hear it as opposed to reading about it. That is the beauty of faded Discs.

WC: What I hope that my work does is that people continue to read, get a good basic background on whatever aspect of Ufology that they're interested in at the time and then combine it hopefully with the audio record. The written word suddenly becomes personified by the person. You start listening to that person and as you're reading the material, you're hearing the person. Sometimes it gives you a whole new way of looking at a particular aspect of Ufology. It's an eye opener. It's just incredible.

SM: Can I ask you about the price? When you look at the web site, all the discs seem to be \$20. Now surely that's not what you're charging for foreign and international orders because the cost of airmail or postage will be greater than to within the US.

WC: Well, that's a really good question. No, that's what I charge whether you're in the United States or anywhere else within the world its \$20 and I pay postage to anywhere within the world. For me this is not a profit oriented project, and let me give you an example of why. Some of these recordings are on wire from way back during the WW2 era. Tape recordings weren't real popular with the masses until the late 1950s.

So to get a wire recorder and then to try to find parts or to have it repaired or whatever costs an arm and a leg and your firstborn. So I use the money strictly for ink to make labels with, to buy the discs, the postage, for the mailer itself. So I'm not really making any money.

SM: I can well believe it. It sounds to me like you're probably dipping into your own bank account.

WC: Oh yes, I've probably put in \$20,000 of my own money. I have a job believe it or not. I have for the last twenty something years taken care of a developmentally disabled young man, who actually works. So while he's at work, I work on the recordings and of course when he gets home, I fix him his dinner and take care of any problems that he may have. He's pretty high functioning but from a safety standpoint he can't live alone, so I pretty much watch over him 24 hours a day. But because he's autistic, he likes to be alone and so I have plenty of time to work on my projects.

So that money there is what I exist on and live on and that and the donations strictly go for supplies and to get upgrades in equipment and the postage and that. There's never really any profit motive behind this and I figure that \$20 kind of helps make it a little easier on me because of the hundreds of hours that I sometimes spend on just one recording so that we can actually hear it.

SM: Are you self-taught on all the audio equipment?

WC: Yes.

SM: That's very impressive. It sounds like you've got a very professional set up there.

WC: Well, actually I do. I have a benefactor who, when some of the equipment costs thousands of dollars and of course I couldn't afford it, my benefactor helps me with it. I have just about everything I need to be able to reproduce any kind of media when it comes in. Even the 16" old electronic transcription discs. I can do those, I can do wire recordings, 8 track.

SM: You'll get rock bands ringing you for studio time.

WC: The only thing is my computer has to be a super nice computer to keep up with all of it, so I'm constantly upgrading the computer system and that can get really expensive.

SM: When can we expect the next release?

WC: I am hopefully shooting for Independence Day.

SM: Oh, that close?

WC: Yes, I've got 17 hours already in the computer bank of abduction material and probably another 5, maybe 6 hours left to do. Then I will design the label and write up the little guide and then I'll start burning them. I'll make up 50 or 60. And then I will announce that it's ready and go on Strange Days Indeed and that kind of thing and try and get the word out. Almost ready for compilation number 4.

I take Paypal, which I know helps a lot of people across the pond. Tim Good always sends a cheque, I don't know why, I keep telling him to Paypal it, but he really enjoys them and has ordered all of them. I just got word from The Anomalist web site that they got the primer and just absolutely loved it. It's nice to know that people are starting to catch on to it. No one has ever said that it was too expensive. Most say, "What a lot of bang for the buck!" Remember, these discs are in MP3 audio format but there's also a printable guide on the disc. These will play on most newer DVD players but they will not play on a standard DVD or CD player. I made them specifically for use with a computer.

I also want to add that if anyone in the UK has any old recordings I would welcome them. I would make a copy and put it on regular CD for them and send it back along with the original tape.

SM: Have you ever had anything from the UK?

WC: Actually, no I haven't. However, I do have many of the BUFORA and Cosmos lectures.

SM: Wendy, thank you very, very much.

If you are fortunate enough to be in possession of any old recordings relating to the UFO subject that you believe are of historical significance, then do all of us a favour and contact Wendy at fadeddiscs@comcast.net

Wendy's web site is <http://www.fadeddiscs.com/> . Although the web site is not yet updated (when I recently looked), a new disc is already available. Called "CE IV: Alien Abduction and Animal Mutilation", it costs \$30, not \$20 due to the fact that it contains almost 26 hours of recordings. And the next disc is not far off either, though not available just yet. It will be called "ETH: Dr. James E. McDonald - An Audio Retrospective."

Bigfoot Seen In Yellowstone National Park

By our reporter on the spot Dam Acne

On Tuesday June 1st. Brendan Bringiton and Darius Doollaley who both work as Rangers for the Park Service Bureau reported an encounter with a Bigfoot type thingy at Lake Bennyhill in the park. Brendan explains,

"We were out looking for a glove that a camper had reported loosing a day or two previously and had been at it for some time. By 8:00 pm the light was beginning to go so we pulled up the truck by the lake and lit a fire. We intended to lay out there for the night and after we'd eaten, we got out the tent equipment and pitched up. Darius and I spent the latter part of the evening telling jokes and singing songs, as we often do when we're away for the night. I have a little routine whereby I put on some of my wife's clothes that I've sneaked out of the house and go into a Moulin Rouge Can-Can dance that really gets him going. He loves it when I kick my legs up real high but anyway, that's another story."

"Anyway, we'd gone to bed, and yet again Darius had forgotten to bring the other sleeping bag so we were crammed into just the one when there was a knock on the door. By that I mean that someone had obviously approached our tent and was standing outside, and hearing the two of us chatting away, had coughed politely and was waiting for a response."

"Somewhat wearily I scrambled out of the bag, put a dressing gown and some furry slippers on and unzipped the flap and stepped outside. By now my hair was in curlers and I wasn't really up to dealing with the public at this time of the day. As I was going through the flap I had started to say, "How can I help?" but as I looked up and saw who was standing there, I never got to finish the sentence."

"Five feet away from me was an enormous humanoid creature, maybe 8 feet tall and totally covered in thick matted hair. The arms were disproportionately long and the fingernails were more like claws. The skull was huge with a deep recession around the forehead and the ears were like saucers. Most noticeable of all though were its eyes. Deeply piercing with obvious intelligence and knowing."

"At that point Darius came out as well and promptly fainted when he saw the creature. I didn't move and neither did the Bigfoot. We stood there for what seemed like an eternity staring at each other and I realised that I was helpless. I'd given him the initiative. He was either going to turn and run or he was going to attack. I was rooted to where I was stood, unable to move. The tension was long past being unbearable, it was excruciating. Suddenly, I became aware of a low rumbling sound, like someone dragging something heavy across a basement floor. After a few seconds, I realised he was speaking;

"Av thee got a can opener chuckles? Eee, me and the missus and the nippers are o'er yonder by that ridge. Tis Bruno's fifth and we promised the little beggar

we'd camp out as birthday treat. But dozy cow has forgotten opener. We've all thar food and can eat nowt. Can thee help thou big Mary Ellen?"

"I stood gaping, my mouth flapping up and down, trying to speak but words just wouldn't come out. I ran through what he'd just said and suddenly thought "Yes, of course I've got one"" and turned round to go back into the tent to get it, standing on Darius's fingers as I did so. He groaned, looked up, and fainted again. I came out and taking my courage in my hands, walked slowly towards the Yeti with my arm outstretched, offering the opener."

"He took it without a word and turned and started to stroll away, each stride being twice one of mine. He'd gone maybe 50 yards when he turned round and started to come back again. As he got within 10 feet, he stopped and spoke once more."

"Ope you don't mind me mithering big boy but ave thee owt I can smoke? Any wacky baccy? I've not had a right doings since Frisco."

"At that point I began to think this was a joke and playfully stepped forward and reached up to his head to pull off what I was now convinced was a huge mask. I grabbed the hair and pulled hard. Oh, was I wrong. Suddenly there was a piercing yell of pain and he jumped back startled."

"He stood looking at me for a few seconds and at that point I was convinced my fate was in the balance. Instead, he looked down at my hand and seeing the clump of his hair that I had pulled out, he said;

"Can I 'ave that back please? I wouldn't want that Loren Coleman getting hold of it. Gotta keep the bugger guessing."

Chris Rolfe is 19.



Bigfoot as photographed by Brendan and Darius

DOES NASA DELIBERATELY ALTER THE SOHO DATA?



by

Kithra

SETTING THE SCENE

Just under a decade ago, in the summer of 1995, a lady called Donna Tietze Hare was interviewed on the Washington D.C. Radio Station. It seems that she spent fifteen years working for NASA as a technical artist. During the interview she claimed that NASA airbrush UFOs out of any satellites images.

A transcript of the radio show can be found here:

<http://www.mufor.org/donnat.html>

However, many, including James Oberg, refute her evidence. The following link has a message that he posted to a UFO Forum giving his reasons for disbelieving her:

<http://www.virtuallystrange.net/ufo/updates/2002/may/m24-003.shtml>

James Oberg has also written articles for the Space.com site in which he addresses the issue of whether NASA hides information or not. In the article at this link, taken from December 1999, he enumerates normal 'anomalous' space images taken during various shuttle missions:

http://www.space.com/sciencefiction/phenomena/shuttle_ufos_examples_991213.html

And in the following article, also taken from December 1999, he discusses whether the space transmissions of the NASA TV images are genuinely real-time ones or not:

http://www.space.com/sciencefiction/phenomena/shuttle_tv_991227.html

As with the Donna Hare case, in both articles James Oberg comes down on the side of NASA.

ANOMALOUS IMAGES

At the end of May 2002 an unknown object was seen on the SOHO LASCO C3 images. Shortly thereafter NASA stopped posting images until they recommenced around a week later on 6th June 2002. However there is evidence of these un-posted images that can be found in the NASA FITS (.fts) files; so perhaps SOHO was being used to track this unidentified object. Meanwhile these anomalous images were showing up on JPL-related sites that are not in the public domain.

When the SOHO images did come back online the viewing frame had noticeably moved, which suggests that it was tracking something whilst offline. To this day the missing SOHO images still remain untraced, and cannot be found in any of the NASA databases; but the log file shows they were digitally post-processed.

The following website, which also contains links to NASA data, gives a very comprehensive account of which files were missing, and also suggests what the unknown object might have been:

<http://www.gxo.com/spacejunk/colorspace.html>

And if you'd like to know where NASA 'hides' the C3 and C2 FITS (.fts) files, you can find them here:

ftp://lasco6.nascom.nasa.gov/pub/lasco/lastimage/level_05/040417/c3/

COMET NEAT (C/2002 V1)

In February 2003 Comet NEAT (C/2002 V1) was clearly visible in the LASCO C3 images. However, there was also much speculation across the Internet that these images had been doctored by NASA prior to appearing on their website.

An article entitled: "Did NASA Fake Comet Flyby?" says: "There is sufficient evidence to suggest that NASA has deliberately tampered with satellite imagery depicting a comet changing its flight path after interacting with the sun on February 18." The article also mentions that some amateur astronomers looking at the web images accused NASA of tampering with them. Very shortly thereafter many discussion boards started to be hacked, which only increased people's suspicions. The article is supported by all the relevant images that it talks about, and you can read it at:

<http://www.exopolitics.org/CometNeat.htm>

This link is NASA's own page of NEAT images for February 18th 2003.

http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/hotshots/2003_02_12/

Or, you can take your pick of all NASA's C3 images at this link:

http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/hotshots/2003_02_12/table.html

Wondering what was going on I emailed NASA myself to ask about some of the points that were being raised in regard to the possible 'doctoring/faking' of those Comet NEAT images:

From: kithra
To: SOHO NASA
Subject: SOHO "NEAT" images
Date: 28/02/2003
Time: 19:20

Is there any truth to this message that I have just read on one of the Internet message boards? It appears to be quoting information gleaned from Dr. Van

Flandern in regard to what happened to some of the Comet NEAT images, and reads as follows:

"Dr. Tom Van Flandern spent 20 years at the U.S. Naval Observatory, where he became the Chief of the Celestial Mechanics Branch. He is also a NASA astronomer and consultant.

It appears NASA themselves were caught off guard as well. NASA appears to be just as anxious for publicity as any other news agency. This is what we think happened...it is extremely possible a grad-student or apprentice inside NASA were practicing their newfound imaging skills on a 'not so unusual' comet. This comet just happened to be named "C/2002 V1". The photo's and trajectory of comet C/2002 V1 are real and original. What our friendly NASA grad-student or apprentice did, was super-impose the imaging to highlight the comet and its path. It would be as if you took a snap shot of any item with a background, then pulled the item away from the background so it would be larger and easily noticed."

If this statement is correct then is there a web link where I can read more about it? Thank you in advance for any comments you are able to make.

----- Original Message -----

From: "D"

To: "kithra"

Sent: Wednesday, March 05, 2003 9:56 PM

Subject: Re: SOHO "NEAT" Images

Hello Liz, it's difficult for me to respond because I do not know the question "Dr. Tom Van Flandern" is answering, nor the context.

I will say this; the raw images are completely unintelligible. To view objects in ANY image from ANY telescope/CCD you must perform background subtraction. This means that what you do is, say, take a box of pixels, compute an average value, and then subtract this value from the box. You then do this for the whole image. Therefore, objects that exist above the background will now have greater contrast above the background than in the raw images. There are lots of other methods of this "background subtraction" but they all pretty much accomplish this same task of enhancing objects that lie above the background noise. This is absolutely necessary to view most any type of CCD imagery. There is no "superimposing" of the comet image onto a non-associated background. I would really doubt the source of this information as I find it really hard to believe a real scientist would mutter such obvious rubbish.

Second, this comet was indeed quite spectacular. In fact, it was, by far, the brightest and largest comet observed by SOHO or by anyone at such a close perihelion distance. In addition, C/2002 V1's orbit was nearly perpendicular to the SOHO-Sun vector allowing for exceptionally accurate observations of tail phenomena. This sort of chance alignment for such a bright comet with an enormous tail may never happen again. To claim this comet was "not unusual" is absurd. I am glad you decided to seek out other sources on this topic.

Hope this helps,

D

From: kithra
To: D
Subject: Re: SOHO "NEAT" images
Date: 06/03/2003
Time: 11:25

Dear D,

Thank you so much for your response. To quote one sentence from your reply:

"I would really doubt the source of this information as I find it really hard to believe a real scientist would mutter such obvious rubbish."

The source of what Dr. Tom Van Flandern said was during an interview with Mitch Battros on the Earth Changes "Live" Radio Hour show. The link to what Mitch is saying is:

http://www.earthchangestv.com/breaking/2003/march_2003/01crow.htm

However, as I am not a subscriber to this site I am not able to actually listen to the interview, but as I understand it the question under discussion was Comet 'C/2002 V1' Facts.

So on the face of it Dr. Van Flandern does actually appear to have made these statements. If that is true does it in any way alter your thoughts about what he said being "rubbish" - as I assume there is a taped record of his really having said these things?

Thank you in advance for any further comments you are able to make.

----- Original Message -----

From: "D"
To: "kithra"
Sent: Thursday, March 06, 2003 4:20 PM
Subject: Re: SOHO "NEAT" Images

Hi Liz, do not believe everything you read. In fact, throughout the article I do not see one set of quotation marks around these statements. I think you're reading Mitch Battros' thoughts or at least how he perceived the comments made by someone else.

The 2nd image that they display on their web page, where they say "The idea of grad-students might explain the upside-down and the wrong year on the second photo." Wow, this is quite unbelievable. First of all, the 2nd image they show was made by me! It is not supposed to be someone trying to "draw" or represent

the actual comet. Take a look; do you see anything that resembles a comet? Second, there is a clear caption on the NASA-SOHO website that says this is the estimated TRAJECTORY that comet NEAT will follow in the telescope's field of view. It is simply telling people that when the comet does arrive, this is where you should expect to see it (that's why there is a line drawn). Third, to address the issue of the "wrong date", obviously if this is a prediction of where the comet should be, then that day has not come yet, right?...hence the word prediction. So, the dates for the comet did not exist yet....hence the word prediction. Therefore, the only logical thing one can do is to use an image one year previous because you will see the same star field in the field of view and will therefore be a better representation of what to expect from the real thing when it did happen. I chose to use the image closest to perihelion one year before (actual perihelion was 2003/02/18 17:06) on which to superimpose the comets expected path (not the actual comet). It is just a coincidence that the CME at the bottom of the image actually occurred one year prior to perihelion. It is not supposed to represent any CME seen during comet NEAT's appearance, it is a completely different one altogether. So, this image is not an image of the comet (I still don't understand where the comet is) but rather an illustration of where to expect the comet in the field of view. And last, I'm not sure how someone could think that we would expect people to believe that a line showed up in our images...again...wow!

This Mitch fellow is an interesting character. I would take anything he says with a grain of salt.

D

From: kithra
 To: D
 Subject: Re: SOHO "NEAT" images
 Date: 06/03/2003
 Time: 18:34

Thank you for such a clear explanation. How amazing that the 2nd image should actually have been made by you personally. Now I can understand exactly how, and why, you had to superimpose the comet's expected path. It was a very good illustration, especially for a non-astronomer such as myself. I take it that NEAT is now on its way out of our solar system, and has not broken up at all.

----- Original Message -----

From: "D"
 To: "kithra"
 Sent: Thursday, March 06, 2003 6:47 PM
 Subject: Re: SOHO "NEAT" Images

I'm happy things are now clear. Yes, it was quite a coincidence that I should be the one answering this question!...small world.

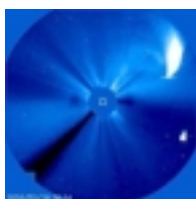
Anyway, we did not observe comet NEAT's nucleus to split while in the field of view...it would have been a good show if we had. As of right now, calculations suggest that NEAT will not leave the solar system completely...it will return in about 38,000 years.

D

From: kithra
To: D
Subject: Re: SOHO "NEAT" images
Date: 07/03/2003
Time: 17:30

Thank you for your reply once again. As I said previously the NEAT trajectory image is now quite clear to me. However, there are still a couple of questions that I am not at all clear about. There are some other images of NEAT, at various places on the Internet, which do indeed seem extremely strange. The best links I can give you are these:

http://www.cyberspaceorbit.com/20030218_0954_c3x.jpg



Slideshow:

<http://www.cyberspaceorbit.com/sohoslideshow.gif>

[hit shift/reload if the animation hangs up]

So I wonder if you could explain and comment on these particular images? Are they real images, or are they also simply illustrative ones - perhaps even more of your own work?

Is NEAT completely out of the field of view now, and if not, how much longer will it stay 'in view', or will you be able to track it with something like the Hubble Telescope? In which case would you be able to tell if the nucleus were to split up at all?

And finally, have you now been able to work out the actual size of NEAT? From the SOHO images it did indeed appear to be an unusually large comet, and it is disappointing that the media took so little notice of it.

----- Original Message -----

From: "D"
To: "kithra"
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2003 8:31 PM
Subject: Re: SOHO "NEAT" Images

Hello,

Slideshow:

<http://www.cyberspaceorbit.com/sohoslideshow.gif>

> > So I wonder if you could explain and comment on these
> > particular images? Are they real images, or are they also
> > simply illustrative ones—perhaps even more of your own
> > work?

I do not comment on images/movies not provided from our own website...I have no idea what has been done to them. Also, if you ever have doubts about what you see in a movie, look at the individual images available on the SOHO or LASCO websites...this will dispel any notions you have.

> > Is NEAT completely out of the field of view now, and if not,
> > how much longer will it stay 'in view', or will you be able to
> > track it with something like the Hubble Telescope?

NEAT was in the field of view from Feb16-20. I have no idea if other telescopes plan to observe this comet...I only know the plans of LASCO.

> > In which case would you be able to tell if the nucleus were
> > to split up at all?

I only know the capabilities and plans of LASCO.

> > And finally, have you now been able to work out the actual
> > size of NEAT? From the SOHO images it did indeed appear
> > to be an unusually large comet, and it is disappointing that
> > the media took so little notice of it.

No we cannot determine the size of the comet's nucleus from our observations. The reason is that the nucleus is surrounded by the coma which is a mixture of gas and dust that boils off the nucleus. Our instrument does not distinguish between light scattered off the nucleus or the dust in the coma, therefore we can't determine where the nucleus begins or ends.

D

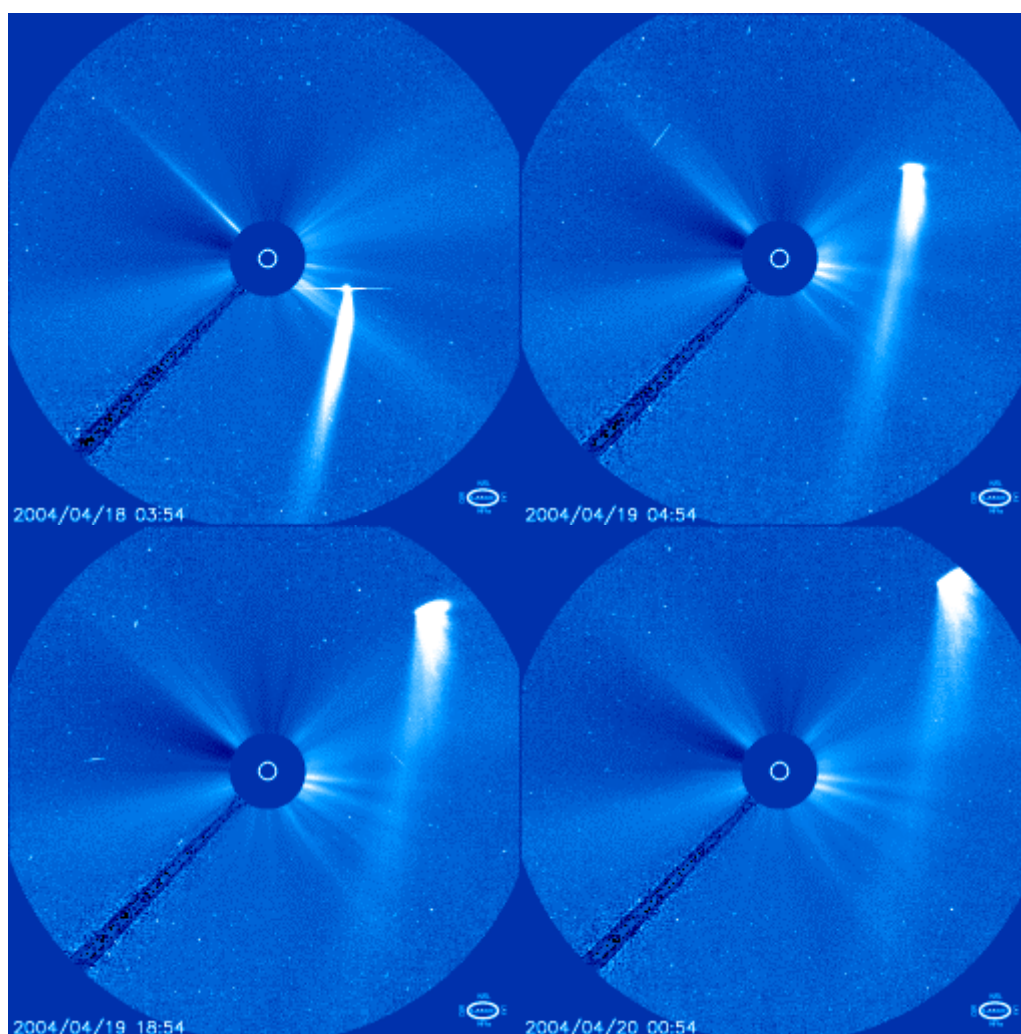
At this point the correspondence ceased.

The above emails were taken from my own personal archives, which you can find at:

<http://kithraskrystalkave.org.uk/archives.html>

COMET BRADFIELD

Then, in the middle of April this year, we had the newly discovered Comet Bradfield; and once again NASA was accused of faking some of the images. The accusations were made for two reasons. Firstly, there was a large data gap from LASCO C3 of around nineteen hours worth of images; and when it finally came back online it appeared that the comet would take a more curving exit path out of the SOHO view. Secondly, many people were commenting that the tail was not pointing away from the Sun, which is what NASA has told us all comet tails do. But Comet Bradfield's tail did not appear to be pointing away from the Sun as it came to perihelion. However, as the view was of a comet travelling straight towards the camera, rather than across the field of view in the C3s that we normally see, it is probable that the image was foreshortened due to being seen head-on. It was even suggested that NASA was using old images and overlaying them on the comet image.



Depending on which link you use to view the SOHO images you will see a "last modified" date underneath them. And one person even reported that when they enlarged one of the C2 images of Comet Bradfield it had a modification date of 13th December 2003 – before Mr. Bradfield had discovered his comet! Yet

another person suggested that in some of the images the stars do not line up from image to image in those released after the data gap.

By 19th April NASA had put up a statement about the accusations that they had been "doctoring" the images:

<http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/data/realtime/Bradfield.html>

About Comet Bradfield LASCO/C3 Images

Well, I'd like to be able to say it was some really outrageous conspiracy; that we've been told by Men in Black that we can't publish the images because they show incontrovertible evidence of extraterrestrial fast food restaurants; that some weird ray from Planet X interfered with our reception; or that the dog ate our images. Unfortunately, what happened was a lot more prosaic. Actually, it was two things:

1. Around 05:00 UT (01:00 EDT) today, the reformatter at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL, the home institution of the Principal Investigator for LASCO), the piece of software that takes the 1's and 0's from the LASCO coronagraphs and makes them into images, broke down. I don't know why, and normally it wouldn't make a difference, because we use images on the SOHO Website that are reformatted, with different software, by NRL machines here at NASA Goddard, in the SOHO Experimenters' Operations Facility (EOF). In an effort to try to prevent overexposure (and thus "pixel bleeding," or the appearance of a line across the bright nucleus of the comet when it dumps too many photons into one or more pixels of the CCD detector), the LASCO Team had decreased the exposure time. The software here then produced very poor images, so the SOHO Website folks decided to go with the images produced at NRL instead.

2. Sometime soon after 05:37 UT (01:37 EDT), the electronics box (the LEB) that runs LASCO and EIT, the EUV telescope on SOHO, started dropping "normal" images from its plan, and only taking images that involve the rotation of a mechanism (the polarizer wheel on LASCO and the sector wheel on EIT). This happens once or twice a year. We don't know why, but we've always been able to restore the instruments to normal operations by rebooting the LEB. Unfortunately, that we missed almost all the C3 images for the day, the ones that contain the comet.

In the last hour, Mr. Kevin Schenk of the LASCO/EIT ops team at Goddard, having abandoned his weekend plans on the first really nice weekend day this spring in Maryland to stay around in case of need, came to the EOF and commanded LASCO: he stopped the then-current plan and load a new one, optimized the exposure times, and got things generally going right again.

Mr. Schenk also managed to get in touch with one of the NRL folks, who also came in to work and got their reformatter started again. I'm looking at a black and white representation of the latest LASCO C3 image at:

<http://lasco-www.nrl.navy.mil/java/lastC3.html>

taken at 22:54 UT. (In case the image has updated between the time I send this and the time you receive it, I'm attaching a copy.) Mr. Schenk found that the shortest C3 exposure time that still shows the solar corona is still too long, and, as you can see in the image, we have pixel bleeding in the comet nucleus. I suspect these images will appear in the normal, colorized format on the SOHO Website soon.

By the way, if you use that link to the black-and-white images, don't be surprised to see a smaller image some of the time --- the LASCO team is also taking shorter exposure, subfield images of comet at much reduced exposure times. The images are the wrong size for display on the SOHO Website, and don't show the solar corona well, but they will be used to put together detailed movies of the comet's passage across the C3 field of view, and comet scientists will be able to use them for research purposed. To my knowledge, such subfield images are the only LASCO images that don't normally get displayed on the SOHO Website.

Sorry for the inconvenience,

*Joe Gurman
US project scientist for SOHO*

Last modification: April 19, 2004

Feedback and comments about this site, please direct to the SOHO Webmaster. Questions about our mission, the spacecraft and science, please check: Dr. SOHO.

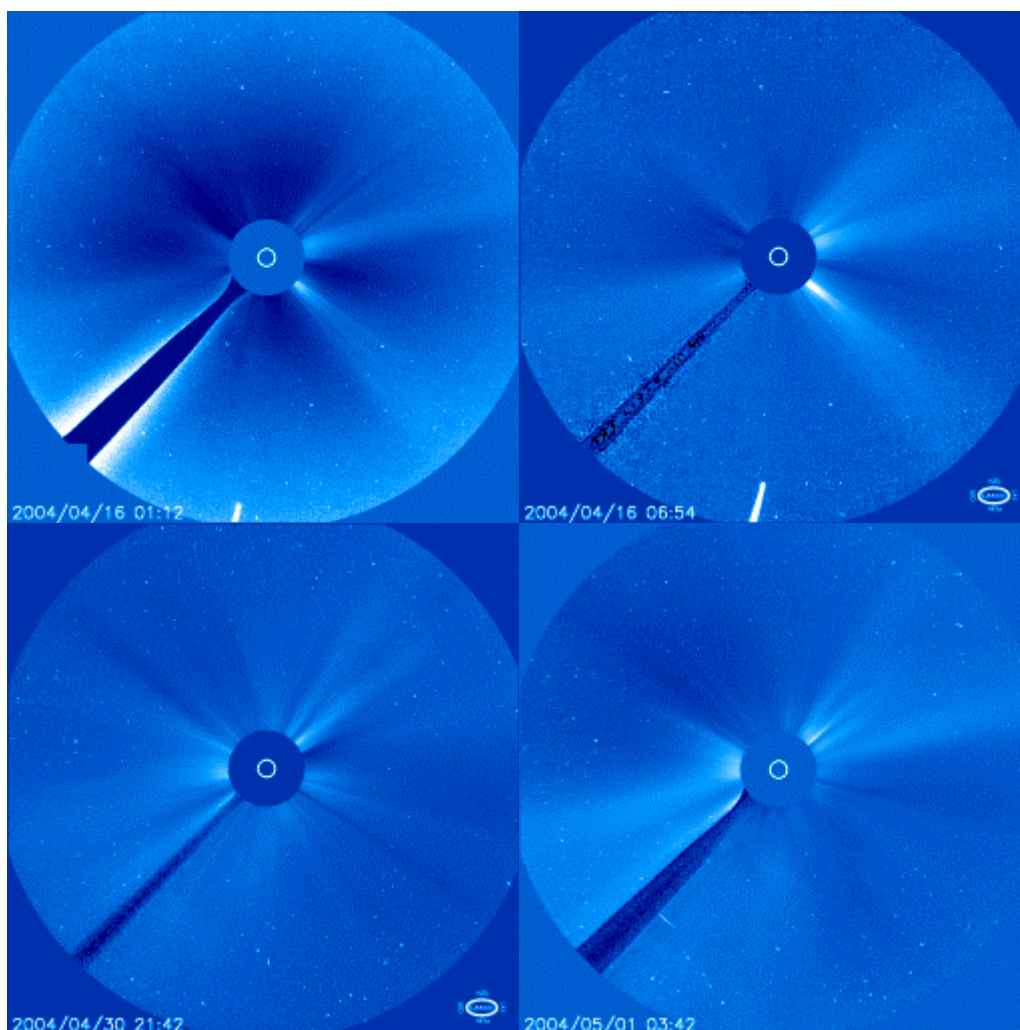
THE VANISHING LOGO

SOHO is positioned one million miles from Earth, and the images can be gleaned from several addresses on the web. Personally I use this link, which says that it has the very latest SOHO images from the following cameras:

EIT 171	EIT 195	EIT 284	EIT 304
MDI Continuum	MDI Magnetogram	LASCO C2	LASCO C3

<http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/data/realtime-images.html>

Normally the only "text" on each image is the time and date stamp in the lower left-hand corner. However, in the early morning of 16th April this year the NASA logo suddenly began to appear in the lower right-hand corner. It continued to appear until the early morning of 1st May when it mysteriously disappeared again. In watching the LASCO C3s for almost three years I have never seen this happen before.



Was it just another “glitch” in a long line of “anomalies?” I’ve no idea, and so I went to see if I could find an answer in the LASCO FAQs at:

http://lasco-www.nrl.navy.mil/rtmovie_faq.html

But I was unsuccessful in my search. However, the page does give a lot of information about how the spacecraft operates, amongst which are answers as to why the images may not be updated. And there are more FAQs at this link:

<http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/explore/faq.html>

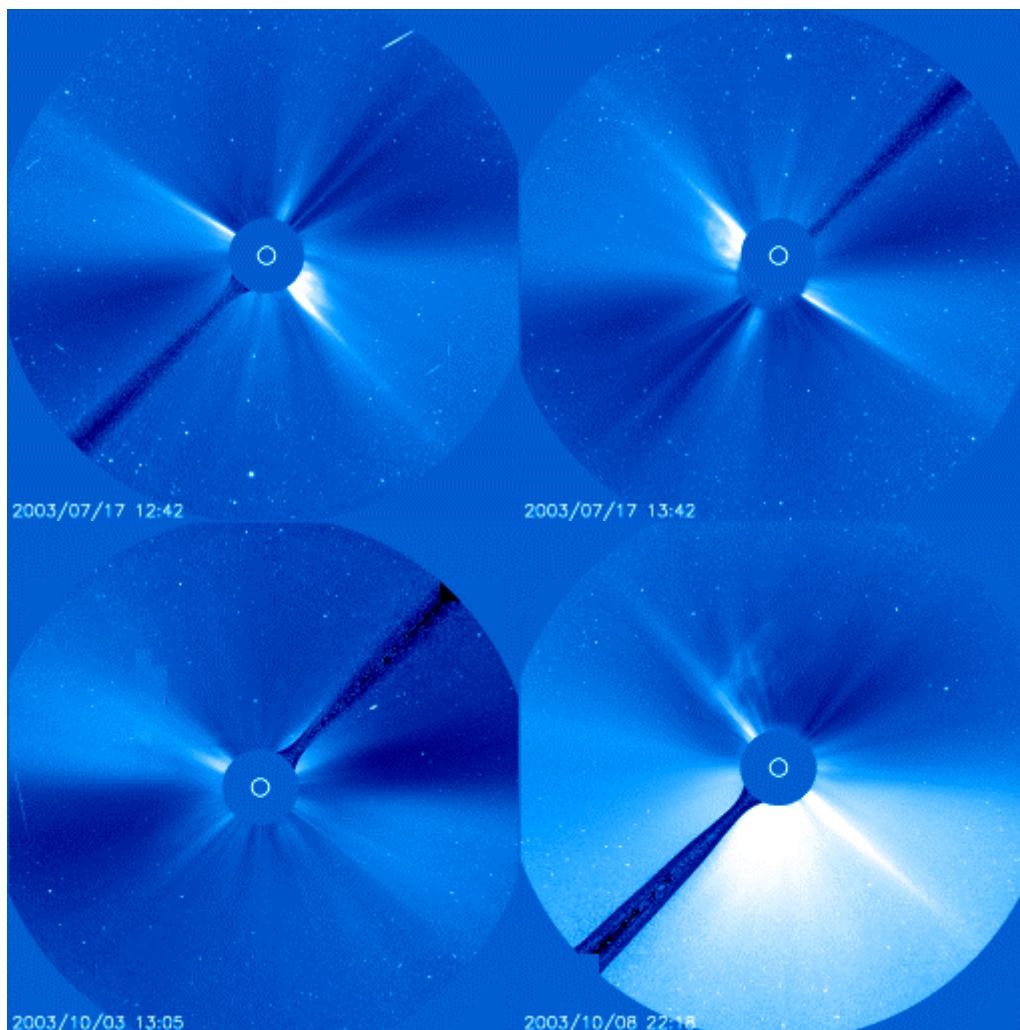
TECHNICAL PROBLEMS?

Is it possible that whenever NASA has a technical problem with SOHO they create a picture with an intentional flaw, just to prove their point? In other words, create an incident, or made-up piece of evidence to support a cover-up story. And is it possible that NASA doesn’t want to public to see just how much the Sun is still displaying above normal activity even though the peak should have been over a couple of years ago? Not that long ago NASA even put forward the theory that the Sun was undergoing what they called a “double peak” in its 11 year cycle.

Even the space.com site, which is highly reputable, had a story in June 2003 about SOHO having serious technical problems that were reducing it's ability to send back data:

http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/soho_problem_030619.html

Also, back in the middle of 2003 it appeared that the LASCO C3 images had been turned upside down!



In a series of emails NASA was asked about this, i.e. whether, as the satellite's dark bar had obviously been rotated 180 degrees it meant that Solar North and Solar South were therefore also upside down. Here is their reply:

"There was a maneuver which should not have affected data display. However, MDI data has been displayed rotated because of a software change roughly at the same time with the mabeuver by the instrument team. We have fixed the problem on the "web-end" and the images now are the correct orientation. Sorry for the confusion. There was a lag in our processing and synch between instrument team and Website.

Solar North is up.

Solar South is down.

As I said, the spacecraft rotated but software compensates. So in what you

see:

Solar North is up.

Solar South is down.

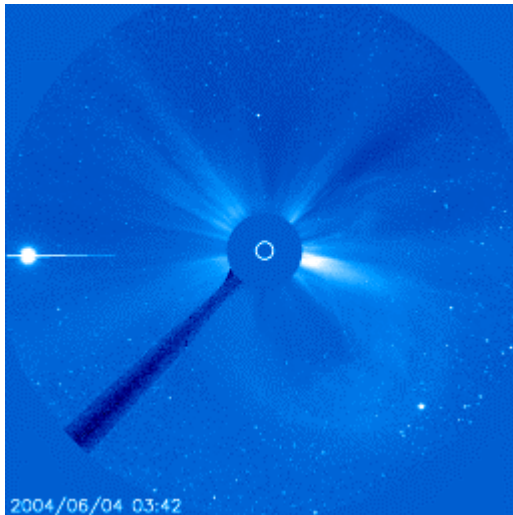
The LASCO black bar is a physical (instrument) piece that is of course rotated (with the spacecraft)."

From the images it would appear that the stars and planets are moving Right to Left, rather than the, normally, other way around. The answers from NASA do seem to be somewhat confusing; as if one hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing. Such confusion may be deliberate, and even allow NASA to slip in a few images that are not actually current. Once again, we have to ask, is this to take our eyes off what's really going on with the Sun's heightened activity, or is it to hide solar anomalies themselves, or even to hide extra-solar objects?

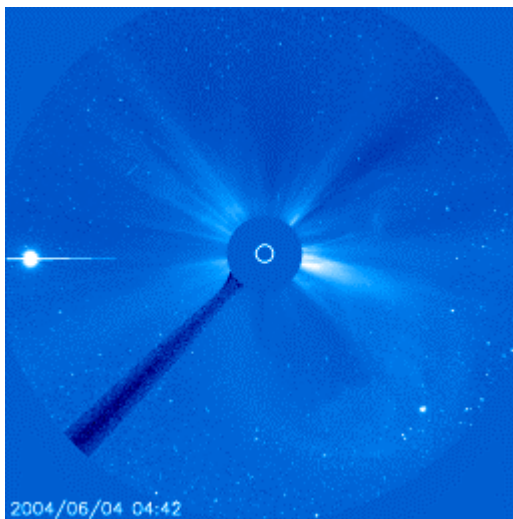
We should bear in mind that this year is seeing the appearance of more comets than ever before; with some instances where two or three are visible in the night sky simultaneously. Also just recently there have also been more reports of meteorites, not just being seen but with some also hitting the Earth, than at any previous time. In fact the number of meteors that are termed as significant, i.e. over one metre in diameter, has been above average during June according to the statistics gathered from Earth orbiting satellites. Up to the middle of the month thirty-six has been observed, with most of them coming in over the oceans; and five of them were deemed to have probably hit the earth and left fragments. NASA currently has less than a hundred scientists searching for these objects; and some astronomers say we are in a debris field left over from one or more recent comets. They are finding new asteroids every day that were totally unknown before.

THE VENUS TRANSIT

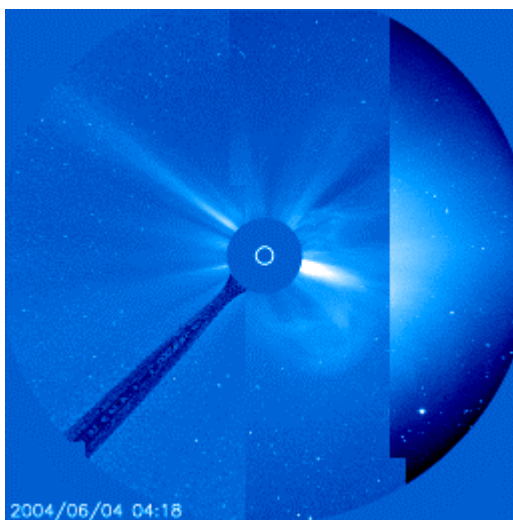
During the transit of Venus across the Sun in June I was closely watching the SOHO LASCO C3 images; and Venus was, naturally, shining more brightly than I'd ever seen it do before. However, in the images taken on 4th June I noticed that Venus had suddenly disappeared for a short while. It was there in an image taken at 03:42,



and it was there in an image taken at 04:42,

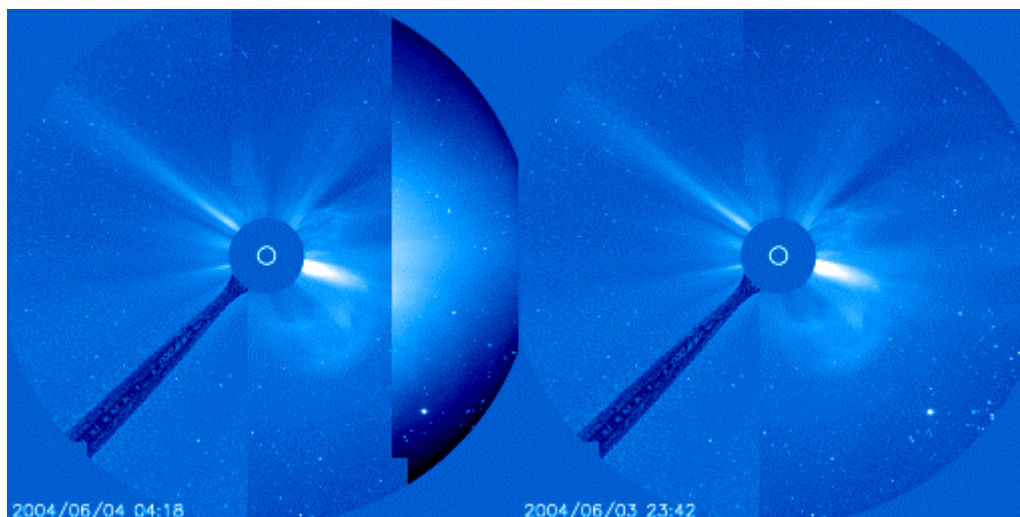


but on the one taken in between, at 04:18,

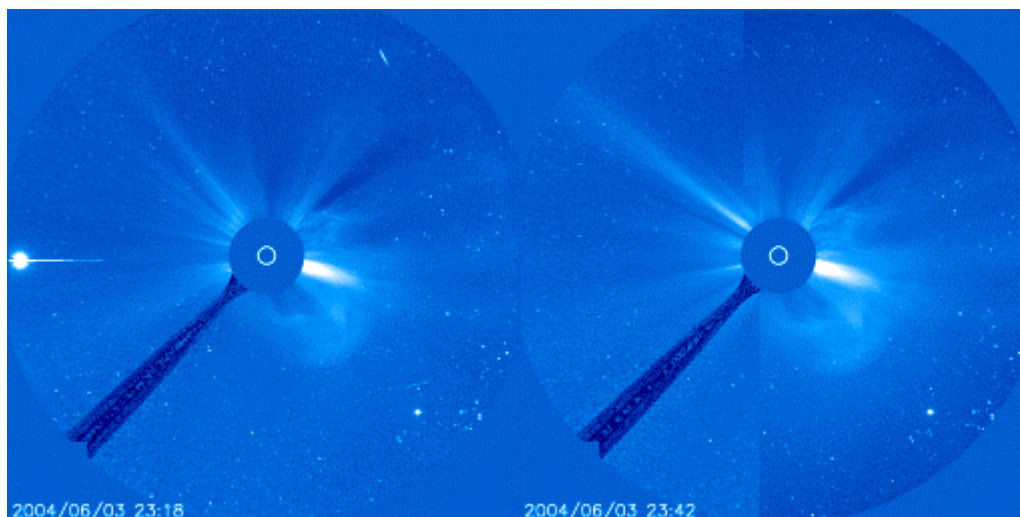


there was no sign of it. That particular image suffered from being rather blanked out on one side, but it wasn't the side where Venus should have been.

I drew this anomaly to the attention of a Forum where I have been a member for the last three years, and the responses I got made interesting reading. One of them pointed out: firstly, that the 04:18 image looks like an adulterated of image of one taken on 2004/64/03 at 23:42: - maybe they were using PhotoShop!



And secondly, that exactly the same thing had happened with a "missing Venus" the previous day. On an image taken at 23:18 it was there, but on the one at 23:42 it had gone!



Of course, that again raises the question of why NASA may be hiding something. Normally, when one asks them about these things their standard reply is that someone made a mistake while processing the images. This has been going on for far too long. It has been drawn to their attention so often in the past that they really should have made sure by now that it stops happening. Therefore one can only conclude that either they are not mistakes but intentional and deliberate, or that they have some very unreliable staff working for them.

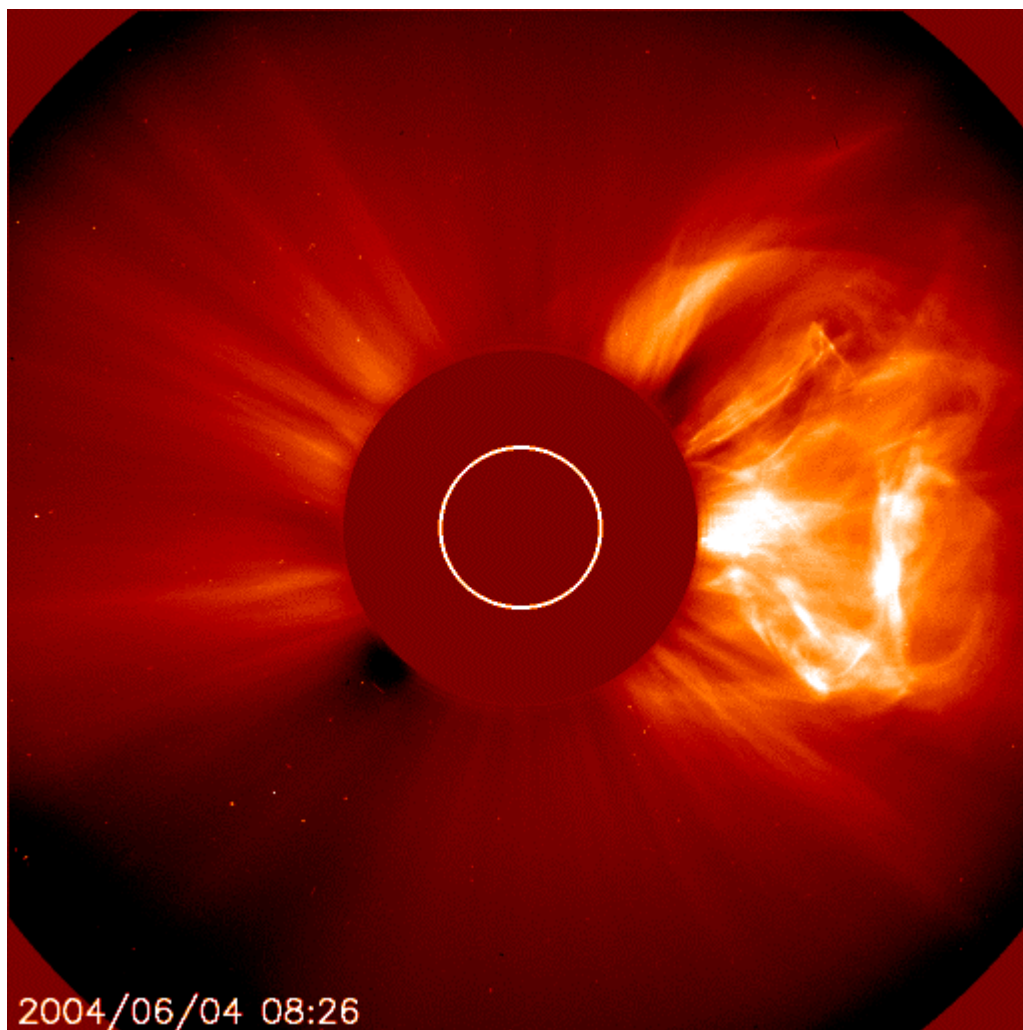
So when the Venus “anomaly” became apparent I emailed NASA to ask them why it had suddenly “disappeared” from those images, and here’s what they replied. (The response is reproduced here verbatim without any correction of spelling or grammar):

"This seems to be a problem with the processing of the telemetry. We first get the telemetry in near real time, and sometimes data are missing (because radio interferences, connection dropouts...). In those cases we sometimes have partial images. In the cases you pointed out, it seems this has happened and the left side of the image where Venus should have been is stale data from some other time. When we receive the final telemetry product (after a delay that can be hours or days), sometimes the LASCO team reprocesses the images for the web and we can post corrected version. I believe this has happened with the 2004/06/04 04:18, but not with the one from June 3."

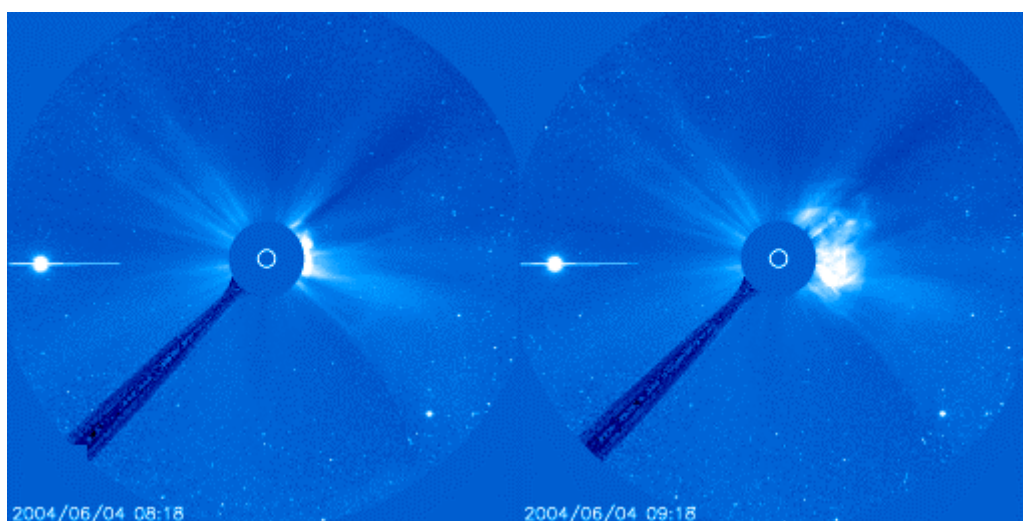
Are we to believe that reply is the truth? I have no scientific leanings, and mathematics is also a foreign language to me, so I ran their response past a friend who is far more knowledgeable than I am, and who has been watching the SOHO data for a very long time. They were quick to note that NASA hadn't really addressed the first anomaly, from 3rd June, at all. In fact they called NASA's response the “razzle, dazzle, double-talk – the same old deceptive nonsense” that we always get in such cases.

Considering the massive amounts of money with which NASA is funded, and the large salaries paid to their highly qualified staff, they should be able to find a way to stop these “mistakes” occurring. However, if they really are “intentional tampering” then it’s very surprising that they fail to cover their tracks. These images are publicly available on their website and it doesn’t take an “Einstein” to see the blatant errors.

At the same time that Venus was transiting the Sun there were large CMEs, (Coronal Mass Ejections) coming from the Sun. Once again Venus “disappeared” from some of the SOHO images. It should have been seen in the EIT images as it passed behind the LASCO C2 disk, but it wasn't. There was also a 13 hour gap in the data from both the C2 and the C3 images while Venus was behind the disk. And so it wasn't just the C3 images in which Venus vanished. Here is a C2 image taken on 4th June at 08:26 in which Venus is nowhere to be seen.

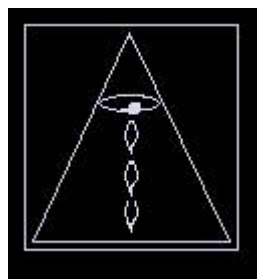


And yet, in both of the C3 images taken around the same time, Venus can be seen.



Hmm! NASA = Never A Straight Answer.

KITHRA'S KRYSTAL KAVE



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<http://kithraskrystalkave.org.uk/index.htm>

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09-Jun-04 17:14:34 BST

History:

0 bids

Item location:

UK

Description

Seller assumes all responsibility for listing this item.

I met "Gerry" as I came to know him 3 years ago. Back then, I was a middle ranking civil servant in the British Ministry of Defence and found myself on secondment to a particular branch of the American military in Idaho for 3 months. The nature of my work was very highly classified and way beyond the level I was working at back in the UK. To say I was a little surprised at being chosen for this assignment would be an

understatement.

I was placed with three co-workers and Gerry was one of them. He was a perfectly nice, ordinary chap with whom I got along well. The behaviour of my other two colleagues towards him however was always a little, well, strained is the best description I can give. They were very polite and friendly and obviously respected his professional abilities, which were outstanding. But I detected a reserve and although I couldn't quite put my finger on it, they would talk to me in a different manner than to the way they addressed him, even though they'd known him longer than they'd known me.

It wasn't a major problem but I was certainly curious and towards the end of my assignment I took the opportunity when it arose and when I was alone with the other two to ask them about it. At first they were a little hesitant but reassured by my security classification and having known me for two and a half months, they began to open up. The story they told caused immense shock and after the conversation finished, I needed an hour alone just to gather enough focus to get up and walk out of the room.

Gerry, it seems, wasn't an ordinary chap after all. He wasn't even human. He was a scientist from the planet Trauts Rellim, a civilisation in the Skcollob Galaxy seven thousand light years away. Their planet had been in contact with Earth for 15 years and he was here on one of many exchange visits that regularly took place. They were a civilization dramatically ahead of ours, understandably, but I don't feel able to describe his field of work.

I decided to speak to him about this as I was quite naturally extremely curious. I asked the other two whether there would be a problem but they solemnly shook their heads and said he'd be only too happy to talk. And he was.

In the remaining two weeks I had, he became a close friend. I told him about my life and he told me about his and his planet. It was truly enchanting but difficult to take on board and digest. On my last day, I asked him if he would do me an immense favour and give me some memento to remember him by. His first response was to say absolutely not as it was strictly against regulations and he didn't want to cause a diplomatic incident. After a few moments though, a smile spread across his face, and then he started to speak.

"As you would imagine," he said to me, "there are many different customs between my home world and yours. Some of the ones here I have had a lot of difficulty adjusting to. Others have been easier. I have to warn you though that what I am about to suggest may cause a, well, negative reaction but it is the only thing I can think of that may satisfy your request. On my planet, it is customary when separating from someone close to you to give them a phial of one's excrement. It isn't offensive on Trauts but I recognise that it would be considered so here. But our

excrement is unlike yours. Its odour is pleasant and it is used as a keepsake. The person receiving it can open the phial and the aroma is a pleasant reminder of their departed friend. I would like you to have some of my excrement.

I tried to stop myself laughing but he could see my discomfort, and laughed too. What the heck, I took it! And he was right. The smell was very pleasant and it could hardly be called a malodorous substance.

I'll be honest. I need money now, having left the Civil Service and this is all I pretty much have to offer. I shall be keeping some of it back. I couldn't let it all go, no way. There are 200 grams of it and I'm keeping back 100.

This substance has been tested by an independent laboratory and has been confirmed as not being of any earthly origin. Given the price I am asking, I am prepared to accept an offer and then before money exchanges hands, I am prepared to let the buyer have a small sample tested by whatever laboratory he designates. Dependant on a satisfactory out come, the sale would then proceed. If the buyer was unhappy with the results, the sale would be nullified and

01875

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Well, I thought it was funny, but then I would. But I did get the feeling that it went down like a lead balloon in some quarters, further confirming that ufology is an entirely serious and sober subject inhabited by people who think Punch magazine was amusing.

As usual, the joy was in the reactions of others. Most, of course got it. After all, there wasn't much to get. Some it angered, and this is where it beggars belief, because they thought it was serious and a con.

Why do it? Well why not. We've had dodgy alien film and dodgy alien rocks on e-bay so why not send the whole silly thing up and take it to its logical conclusion? If people are going to offer crap for sale, then let's get right down there with 'em and offer real crap for sale.

Space and Astronomy

Relativity and the Lakes of Titan

By

Andrew Pike

Einstein's theory of general relativity has never failed any test to which it has been subjected. Fortunately, it passed its latest test with flying colours. The test was made using the Cassinni probe currently on its way to Saturn. Using data from the probe an experiment was conducted by Italian scientists which has confirmed Einstein's beliefs to a precision fifty times greater than possible before now.

The experiment took place when Cassinni was one billion kilometres from Earth (620 million miles) at a time when both were on opposite sides of the Sun. By observing the frequency shift of radio signals to and from the spacecraft, the team of scientists were able to precisely measure the subtle changes in their round trip time caused when the signals passage close to the Sun.

Because Einstein said a massive object (like the Sun) will cause space-time to curve in its present any signal will be diverted from a straight line taking further to reach its destination. In other words the signal would have to follow the dip in space-time created by the Sun.

The Cassinni experiment has confirmed this fact to an unprecedented accuracy of 20 parts per million, a far greater accuracy than achieved in 1979 using the Viking Landers on Mars. These results have been possible thanks to a new communication system which uses signals at different frequencies effectively allowing astronomers to remove the interplanetary plasma and solar corona effects from the radio data.

Cassinni appears to be doing well generally. It has already sent back some pictures of Saturn even though it does not arrive at the planet until November this year.

When it does arrive it will be carrying ESA's landing probe called Huygens. Huygens is due to land on the surface of Saturn's largest moon, Titan. Titan is somewhere in size between Mercury and Mars and because of this it is one of the planetary sized moons of our Solar System. Like Beagle 2 recently sent to Mars, the Huygens probe is hitching a ride on a larger probe. The main probe, Cassinni, will despatch Huygens once it reaches the ringed planet. Let us hope that it does not go the same way as Beagle 2 after separation.

On its arrival at Saturn one of the first objects encountered by Cassinni will be another moon, Phoebe, at a distance of 1,200 miles (2,000 km). Phoebe is a very red object and it is not certain whether this colour indicates a captured asteroid or a dead comet, my money is on it being a captured asteroid. Yet

another moon, Enceladus, shows signs of recent volcanism, an area which will no doubt be investigated by Cassini when it arrives.

However, it is the Huygens probe which has the most uncertainty associated with this mission. The probe will be dispatched from Cassini onto the uncertain surface of Titan the composition of which remains largely a mystery. At the moment it is not clear what the surface of Titan is really like, whether it is liquid, solid or a combination of both.

Keeping an Eye on Titan

The Hubble Space Telescope (HST) has taken 14 images of Titan, which shows that it may have a landmass the size of Australia rotating every 16 days. This figure is the same as the time it takes Titan to spin once on its axis suggesting it is a genuine surface feature and not some form of atmospheric cloud formation. Cassini should be able to map the details of Titan's surface in far greater detail than the HST, maybe even to a resolution of 100 metres.

In readiness for this event astronomers are continuing to look at the moon with Earth based instruments to get some clues as to what the probe might encounter on landing. Further discoveries have come with images gleaned from the Keck II telescope in late 2001 and early 2002 involving the atmosphere of Titan. Ever since the Voyager 1 spacecraft sped by the Saturnian moon in November 1980, scientists have been mystified by its dense smoggy atmosphere. This atmosphere is causing astronomers similar problems to those encountered with early work with Venus, the thick cloudy atmosphere shields the surface features from our telescopes.

At its remote distance from the Sun, Titan receives only one per cent of the heat compared to that received on the Earth yet it manages to retain this thick, nitrogen rich atmosphere. Also present are smaller amounts of hydrocarbons. The atmospheric pressure is about 50 per cent greater than on Earth at sea level and there is probably rain although not the same type found on Earth. With a surface temperature estimated to be minus 180 degrees Celsius water would be as hard as rock. It is the moon's methane and ethane which might make up the rain existing in both liquid and gas forms depending on its exact location in the atmosphere. Precipitation on Titan might therefore take the form of hydrocarbon droplets raining down on the surface. Until recently all this was guess work, now after 23 years, astronomers have finally detected the telltale signs of such weather clouds.

In 1999 Dr Caitlin Griffith and colleagues at the University of Arizona analysed variations in infrared spectra of Titan which showed changes in intensity over a period of a few hours. Griffith attributed these changes to a cycle of evaporation and condensation of methane in much the same way as the hydrological cycles operating on Earth, forming short-lived clouds. Recent new information has been obtained using adaptive optics systems installed on the 10 metre W.M. Keck telescope on top of Mauna Kea in Hawaii where Dr Michael E. Brown of the California Institute of Technology searched near infrared images of Titan for signs of tropospheric clouds.

After recording a series of images of Titan on 10/11 December 2001 and 28 February 2002 and analysing them using the latest software developed by Griffith, the Hawaii team were delighted to pick up a very bright spot near Titan's south pole. It is believed the spot is an extensive cloud layer located at an altitude of some 10 miles (16 km). In fact this tropospheric cirrus cloud covers much of Titan's southern hemisphere at latitudes greater than 35 degrees. These results suggest that methane cloud formation is controlled by seasonal changes in temperature and that the clouds move from south to north on a 15 year time scale -half the length of Saturn's year. What this means is the chances of Titan having large deposits of liquid hydrocarbons on its surface is greatly increased. However, there is a limit to what can be done from Earth, final conformation will have to wait for the Huygens probe.

Early Conclusions

Early investigations into the atmosphere of Titan showed that as well as nitrogen, there was also argon and, of course, methane. The radiation from the Sun breaks the methane down into hydrogen and free radicals. The hydrogen is too light to hang around in the gravity of Titan and escapes into space leaving the free radicals behind. These then allow the formation of larger hydrocarbons which condense to form particulates. This in turn gives rise to the orange haze for which Titan is so famous.

As I mentioned, the surface of Titan is more of a mystery. Even in early work it was believed to be partly solid with possibly liquid oceans of ethane. There may also be a solid layer of acetylene underlying the ethane ocean, which thankfully, in the absence of free oxygen, will not ignite! The most available source of oxygen being from water and this is completely frozen in the minus 180 degree temperature on Titan's surface.

The Slime of Titan

Amongst the many Investigations carried out on the atmosphere of Titan is one of particular interest by the late Carl Sagan. Sagan reproduced the conditions thought to be present in Titan's atmosphere in a laboratory and subjected that atmosphere to irradiation by charged particles. He obtained a dark brown organic sludge, which he called tholin after the Greek for mud. It is likely that if these conditions are correct the surface of Titan may be covered in a thick layer of tholin slime. Sagan also found that when the tholin was subjected to water, amino acids were formed as well as nucleotide bases and a whole measure of assorted organic building blocks thrown in for good measure making Titan a rich organic soup bowl for life. All it takes is some liquid water, which might be provided from heating the ice following impacts from incoming comets and asteroids. Not too much, however, in case the acetylene ignites! This process is also important for another reason: it might give life a kick-start providing what is called the Frankenstein Factor.

The Frankenstein Factor

As the name suggest this is the 'kick' needed to spark inanimate material into life. Just like in Mary Shelly's story, this might be done with electric shocks. Unfortunately, unless there is a Frankenstein Factor present all the material for life could be present, but life would not get a foothold let alone evolve. The alternative to a lightening strike might be heat. Heat is a poor substitute and with the lack of heat from the Sun in the depths of the Solar System this form of

Frankenstein Factor might be ruled out if it were not for the occasional asteroid or comet impact.

However, lighting is not ruled out, after all there is a dense atmosphere on Titan and with it the possibility of lightning strikes. This point is still under debate by most astronomers until we learn more about Titan's weather system. The Frankenstein Factor, or lack of it, might be the major drawback to finding life on any of the moons of Saturn or Jupiter. The four Galilean moons of Jupiter might have the organic material for life, and Europa and Callisto might have deep salt oceans like on Earth, but without that all important 'kick' it might amount to nothing. Indeed with the Galilean moons there is little if any atmosphere to give lightening strikes, although they are heated internally by the gravitational pulling about from mighty Jupiter.

At least Titan possesses a thick atmosphere, which is interesting for other reasons. For one thing it is the only moon in the Solar System to have a decent atmosphere. Moreover that atmosphere is made of nitrogen. In many respects the moon is like the early Earth, frozen in time.

Latest Radar work

The latest evidence from Earth based radar suggests that Huygens might splash down in one of many liquid hydrocarbon lakes. The exact surface composition is not known, but ever since the days of the Voyager probes in the 1980s speculation has been circulating that Titan might have large expanses of liquid ethane together with other hydrocarbons.

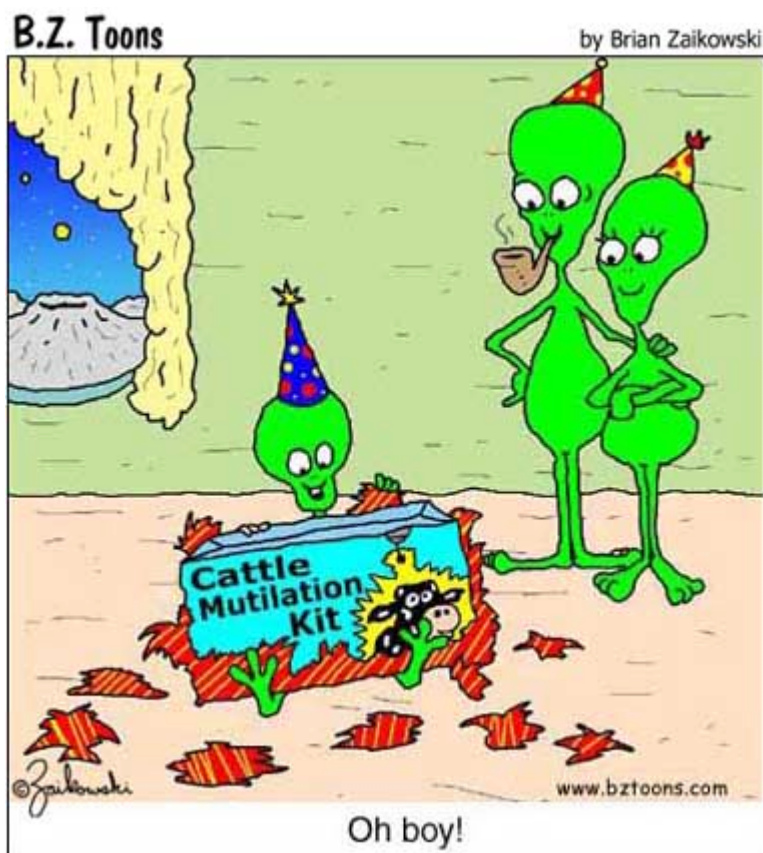
The most up to date radar echoes were made in November and December 2001 and 2002. They were made by the World 's largest radar system at the Arecibo Observatory. To provide radar images of Titan, a tiny moon orbiting way out in the Solar System, the telescope used a megawatt of power to provide a weak reflection 2.25 hours later. Results suggest the moon is marked with dark and light patches ruling out a global ocean. Strong radar echoes from Titan's leading edge are interesting although what they signify is uncertain.

A team of scientists at Cornell University have also found mirror-like glints from smooth, dark areas 50 to 150 kilometres across. These might suggest smooth surface regions but it might also suggest liquid hydrocarbons reflecting the radar signal, like the Earth's oceans reflect sunlight.

Another possibility has come from Ralph Lorenz of the University of Arizona who suggests they might indicate the presence of impact craters. Following their creation they would have filled with liquid ethane and methane forming lakes. Certainly there should be impact craters on the surface of Titan. Estimates suggest that something like 80 measuring 150 kilometres would be present and many thousands smaller than that. Radar data hints that about 75 per cent of Titan's surface might be covered in this way.

Organic Origins

Where does all this Hydrocarbon material come from? The answer seems to be the interaction of sunlight, in particular ultraviolet radiation, with the methane in Titan's upper atmosphere. This produces photochemical reactions which over time build up the hydrocarbons we see today. In effect this would have produced hydrocarbon rain, which fell to the surface forming and frozen lakes. Finding the answers to Titan's surface conditions rests with the Huygens probe. That is if it lands safely. Unfortunately with the uncertainty surrounding the moon's surface we can only keep our fingers crossed. If Huygens lands in an ethane or methane lake or ocean it will still be safe. Because of all this uncertainty it is designed for both a hard surface landing and ocean landing.



Net Review

There have been some very interesting articles this past month on the Net that has caught the eye. I felt they were worth reproducing them here.

Navy Comes Clean After ECTV Disclosure. 06/16/04

By

Mitch Battros (ECTV)

It appears yesterday's ECTV article on 'false reading' earthquakes and vast electronic interference, has prompted a response from DoD's media department.

A rather unusual announcement was released this morning, disclosing to the public for the first time, a previous top secret testing operation in the Atlantic. It is known as operation "Northern Edge". This exercise appears to be utilizing HAARP <http://www.haarp.alaska.edu/haarp/>.

Cmdr. Joe Murphy, U.S. Alaskan Command reports, "a new combat system is being tested. The new testing devise is used for what is commonly known as "jamming", the Improved Capabilities System III (ICAP III) overloads specific hostile communication bandwidths, causing users to temporarily lose service.

http://www.dcmilitary.com/navy/tester/9_15/features/28548-1.html

"Training and testing of ICAP III is a stepping stone for the Navy", said Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Ron Szpynda, Air Test Evaluation (VX) 9. "This is the first time we have used this system."

VX-9's EA-6B Prowlers are being used to test the system. The aircraft provides protection for strike aircraft, ground troops and ships, by jamming enemy radar, electronic data links and communications.

"The system floods an opposing bandwidth with more frequency than those operating systems release", said Cmdr. Jim Winship, VX-9 branch head. "This causes users to temporarily lose service. Everything from telephones to sophisticated electronic equipment goes static, because the jammer can overwhelm the frequencies they use."

ROSWELL: 52 YEARS OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

By Donald R. Schmitt & Thomas J. Carey

How could such a monumental event as a UFO crash in 1947 be kept a secret so long? Surely the real story would have leaked before now, as has seemingly happened to every government secret in the past 25 years. President Nixon himself, with all his powers and resources, wasn't able to prevent reporters Woodward and Bernstein from uncovering the Watergate conspiracy.

Secrets surely do leak, but some secrets don't for long periods of time. Consider these instances:

The F-117 Stealth fighter was developed in secret and was flying for almost a decade while the public was told the aircraft was still on the drawing board.

Project Ultra, the Allied World War II project that allowed us to break the codes of the Germans and thereby hasten their defeat, was a secret for 30 years until revealed in the 1970s.

Radiation experiments by the U.S. government on their own personnel during and after WWII were kept secret until the last five years. Only recently have the numerous military accidental deaths from nuclear devices been disclosed, not because of a desire by the government to admit the truth, but because of the dedicated probing of civilian organizations.

Mind-control experiments by the CIA on unsuspecting citizens 30 years ago were kept secret until the past few years.

Charles B. Moore of Project Mogul fame never knew the name of the secret project he was working on until 1992!

So it is certainly true that the government can keep secrets; but to what lengths are public officials prepared to go to enact a cover-up? Consider this one instance from an event that occurred during World War II. The Boeing Airplane Company was secretly developing the B-29 bomber for the Army Air Force at its main plant near Seattle. On February 18, 1943, a prototype B-29 caught on fire during a test flight and crashed in Seattle onto a meat packing plant. The plane actually passed over downtown Seattle during its rapid descent. All members of the crew died, along with several employees of the plant and some of the firemen who fought the blaze that engulfed the plane and plant.

Thousands of people saw the plane coming down and the subsequent fire and rescue efforts. Did the story of the crash of a secret aircraft go out over the wires that same day, with accounts from these many witnesses? Although it seems unlikely, the FBI succeeded in preventing any but the most garbled information from leaking out. FBI agents went so far as to intercept all copies of City Transit Weekly, an employee newsletter that carried photos of the plane taken by a Seattle city bus driver.

So the government does keep secrets, and it will take extreme measures to protect those secrets in matters of national security. Could the Roswell event have been sufficiently important to warrant such treatment? We think so, and so must have two men, both now deceased, whom we have interviewed.

The Provost Marshal at the Roswell base, the equivalent of the chief of police, was in charge of all security at the crash site in 1947. When we located and then contacted Col. Edwin Easley in late 1989, it was the first time anyone had extensively questioned him about what had occurred. The Provost Marshal did not tell us the weather balloon cover story, nor did he give us a true account of the Roswell recovery. Instead, he told us that he considered himself still sworn to secrecy about the event—after 43 years! "I can't talk about it," was all that Easley kept repeating.

The second officer we interviewed was an agent in the Counter-Intelligence Corps, Lt. Colonel Sheridan Cavitt. He accompanied another intelligence officer, Major Jesse Marcel, on the initial trip to the debris site and, we believe, wrote a report on the incident for his superiors in Washington. At first, this intelligence agent refused to admit that he was stationed at Roswell in early July 1947 or that the event had occurred at all. There had been no newspaper story, no fuss, not even the recovery of a weather balloon. After much prodding, he was willing to admit to the U.S. Air Force only that a weather balloon came down and was recovered, but that was as far as he would go. He admits no other personal involvement, even though other reliable sources give him a central role. Now he is considered the number one participant/witness for the Air Force, endorsing their Mogul balloon theory.

We admire how seriously these gentlemen took their oaths of secrecy for almost 50 years, but we must raise this question: Why the need to conceal the recovery of a Mogul weather balloon after more than 50 years?

The government cover-up extends to the public records of the Air Force UFO investigation as well. Those records were released in 1976, and the file on Roswell contains but a single press clipping. No letters, no notes, no investigative forms, no official weather balloon explanation, nothing but that lone clipping. The file for the recovery of an identical weather balloon in Circleville, Ohio, at the same time as the Roswell event, contains far more documentation on its particulars. Where is the documentation that should be in the Roswell file? Historical Roswell AFB records have also disappeared without a trace according to the GAO investigation.

The evidence presented here establishes that the Roswell crash was one of those events that had to be kept secret by whatever means were necessary. Files and notes were confiscated from reporters, radio stations were warned not to air stories, a phoney story was concocted, and men were sworn to secrecy. Many of these tactics today would be termed civil rights violations.

As you can well imagine, it has not been an easy task to reconstruct what actually occurred in July of 1947. Many of the men (and the few women) involved are now dead, and those living are quite elderly. Human memory does not record events with complete accuracy, especially after years have elapsed.

As Kevin Tierney has explained in his book *How to Be A Witness*, when someone has been asked to recount his memory of an event several times, "For the most part what he says will be the same, but there will generally be minor discrepancies between his recollection on one occasion and the next." This is certainly true for the accounts we have gathered concerning Roswell, and the natural errors that creep into an individual's memory mean that some inconsistencies exist in the testimony you will read. Nevertheless, the general pattern of events we have recorded from essentially all the witnesses does fit one consistent picture.

As those above the age of five at the time of President Kennedy's assassination can relate, the moment when they first learned of that gruesome event is permanently etched in their minds—a snapshot memory. Several of the Roswell witnesses have compared their memories of the 1947 event to that of the assassination: The Roswell memories are vivid and detailed, despite the passage of 50 years.

Government secrecy is not always something evil and unjustified. We understand and support the practice of secrecy as it applies to certain types of information. Some information should remain hidden, such as nuclear firing codes, covert military activity, undercover police investigations, and information regarding intelligence work. But records documenting the recovery of a Mogul balloon hardly merit such treatment. And Project Mogul was a failed experiment.

What could have happened so long ago at Roswell to cause former intelligence officers to abide by their oaths of secrecy today, even though previous accounts of the recovery have been published and broadcast? What kind of event required such high levels of security that the intelligence officer who participated in the initial recovery of the debris, and who was entrusted with the task of taking some of the debris to higher levels of command, was not allowed to read the written report upon his return? What caused the military to place the ranch manager who reported finding the debris under house arrest? Why have the military records of men involved with the debris disappeared?

Unfortunately, we face the same problem that other researchers face—lack of physical evidence. While it is generally accepted that all efforts by civilian researchers have yielded no tangible evidence, it is also true that Roswell may have indeed established that "nuts and bolts" evidence. But still the question remains, who is telling the truth—the officials who deny that physical proof, or the hundreds of witnesses who stand in total opposition to that position?

And if the Roswell incident is indeed what hundreds of credible witnesses swear it was, the enigma of UFOs is no longer spurious or abstruse. Answers, though known only by a select few, are still being withheld. However, we can now, in total confidence and conviction, direct the public to the undeniable source of the proof. Proof that would enable us to finally lift the veil of secrecy that surrounds Roswell. With all of that as a precursor, put aside all political agenda, all preconceived opinions, all bias, and consider the following:

If the debris originated from a top-secret test, why was there no recovery or search operation underway until rancher Mac Brazel reported the debris to Sheriff George Wilcox one day after the find on Sunday, July 6? An aerial search over open range and high desert would have taken but a few hours to locate any downed object. This has been confirmed by retired military officers, who were involved in actual search-and-rescue missions in New Mexico. We, too, have flown private planes over the Brazel site demonstrating the panoramic field of vision. Given that the debris field was three-quarters of a mile long, a search and recovery team could have located it long before Brazel did.

Weather balloons had fallen onto Brazel's ranch on a number of occasions, and he turned them in for the rewards offered. Such devices always carried instructions and return policies which usually included the name of the manufacturer and location of the launch site. In 1945, he reported finding the remains of a Japanese balloon bomb. This time, however, he reportedly was angry because of the large amount of debris. His frightened sheep would not cross the pasture due to the vast coverage of the material. It is interesting to note that weather balloons are still dropping on the ranch. The current owners store them in an old feed storage silo. One particularly large balloon, about 20 feet in diameter, took one man approximately two minutes to retrieve. He had no trouble identifying it.

After personally examining samples of the material, why did Brazel's neighbors encourage him to report the crash for the \$3,000 reward reported by the press for physical evidence of a flying disc and not for the standard \$5 balloon reward?

How did the highly trained and experienced military officers of the famous 509th atomic bomb wing, the first and only nuclear strike force in the world at that time, mistake a conventional weather instrument for an object they all, without exception, concluded to be an actual "flying saucer?" Skeptics who believe that it was a special radar-reflecting balloon from Project Mogul have said that the civilians, the base commander, Col. William Blanchard, the head of intelligence, Marcel, and all the other officers at Roswell were unfamiliar with such specialized equipment. Marcel, however, had a radar interpretation officer assigned to his office. He would have been able to recognize the balloon, even if the others were fooled.

Even considering Mogul, balloon materials consisting of Neoprene rubber, reflective foil, wooden sticks, masking tape, and balling twine still comprised such a device—materials easily identifiable by even a child.

What type of balloon and instrument package could scatter debris over an area three-quarters of a mile long and create a 500-foot long/10-foot wide gouge in the tough high desert country of New Mexico which consists of little topsoil and mostly shale and slate stone?

What type of balloon would fill Marcel's 1942 Buick convertible, and Cavitt's jeep carryall truck and still require 50 to 60 troops with wheelbarrows and trucks two days to complete the cleanup?

Why did the military check the site for possible radiation if the downed object

was nothing more than a common weather/Mogul balloon?

After he was found at the home of Walt Whitmore Sr., majority owner of radio station KGFL in Roswell, on the morning of Tuesday, July 8, why was Brazel held in detention at the base for another seven days? According to Brazel, he was not allowed to place any outside calls, not even to his wife. He was also forced to undergo a physical examination. His family and neighbors remember how he later complained how he had been asked the same questions "over and over again," and that he described the experience by saying he "was in jail."

Why did the Secretary of the Federal Communications Commission, a Mr. Slowie in Washington, D.C., personally call Whitmore at KGFL and threaten removal of his broadcasting license if the station continued airing reports of the incident? Why would the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico, also call Whitmore and persuade him to comply with the FCC order?

Why the need for extreme security measures at the crash site of a downed meteorological instrument? Measures such as: armed guards surrounding the inner gouge area, another cordon around the perimeter, riflemen posted on the surrounding hills, and MPs stationed on the outlying roads from Saturday, July 5, through at least Thursday, the 10th.

Why was Bud Payne, a hired hand on one of the neighboring ranches, physically removed from the Brazel ranch during the military occupation of the site? As Payne was attempting to round up a stray cow, a military jeep roared up to him and MPs physically forced him off the ranch.

Why were there seven confirmed (possibly eight) flights to transport the remains of a balloon? Most of the wreckage was flown out under high security July 5–10 . . . rather extreme treatment even within the confines of the top security base in the world at that time. If the object was nothing more than a weather balloon, or even a Project Mogul device, why would Colonel Blanchard set up operations at the recovery site? As the commanding officer of the 509th Bomb Group, Blanchard would have had more important duties.

Why was farmer Sherman Campbell and the local sheriff in Circleville, Ohio, able to immediately identify the Rawin (Mogul) target device that crashed there on July 5, while no one in Roswell could? In fact, the Campbell family was even permitted to keep the balloon the Air Force currently claims was so secret.

Why was the debris of a weather balloon, as identified by Warrant Officer Irving Newton, displayed in Brigadier General Roger Ramey's office different from that of a Mogul balloon device? The new Air Force theory describes painted floral symbols on masking tape used to reinforce the radar kite in an effort to explain hieroglyphic-like characters on I-beam structures as portrayed by witnesses. Even under high magnification none are evident in the photographs taken in Ramey's office at Fort Worth (Carswell) Army Air Field in Texas. Why did Ramey's Chief of Staff Colonel Thomas J. DuBose (who is pictured with Ramey in two of the weather balloon photos) sign a sworn affidavit in 1990

attesting to switching the balloon wreckage for the genuine material? "It was a cover story . . . to get the press off of Ramey's back."

Contrary to Ramey announcing to reporters the weather balloon explanation along with his cancellation of debris being flown to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, why did the FBI refute the General's claims in a telex which was sent at 6:17 p.m. CST the same day of the press conference on July 8? "...But that telephonic conversation between their office and [Wright Field] had not borne out this belief. Disc and balloon being transported to Wright Field by special plane for examination."

Why did a special photo team from Washington, D.C., under the command of Col. Anton Hansen, arrive at Roswell to photograph the recovery and record the subsequent events? Against standard operating procedure, the 3rd Photo Lab at the Roswell base was never called in to photograph the crash site or the material.

Why were two Secret Service agents by the names McCann and Devignes dispatched from Washington to represent the president in Roswell during the incident?

Why were there unknown doctors and nurses observed at the Roswell base hospital at the time of the incident as noted by nurse Rosemary McMannis?

If the recovery was of nothing more unusual than a Mogul balloon, photographed in Ramey's office by the news media on July 8, why did the military, on July 9, tour the various news media in Roswell retrieving copies of Walter Haut's press release? If there was nothing to the story, why did the military search radio station KGFL, taking everything that related to the crash, including the documents that newsman Frank Joyce tried to hide?

Why did the U.S. military, like a scene from a 1950's sci-fi movie, surround the Roswell Sheriff's Office just to retrieve a small box of debris that Brazel had left there days earlier?

Why did the Pentagon contact Muroc (Edwards) Army Air Field in California inquiring as to any missing Northrop flying wings within days of the crash north of Roswell? Muroc responded "negative." Due to jet engine conversion, none were operational in 1947. Eyewitnesses reported the recovered craft at Roswell was wing-shaped, not saucer.

There was reportedly talk at the base during the recovery concerning "bodies" involved in the crash. Rumours circulated through the town of Roswell about one of the crew still alive. One day after the first press release, the Army and Navy, as reported by the Associated Press, moved to "Shut down the rumours." The Air Force now maintains that no such "talk" concerning bodies took place. Why?

Secrecy oaths would not have been required for the recovery of a weather balloon, or any other conventional device, unless it was a highly classified subject. Why were the men involved taken into a conference room in groups of

10–12 and verbally sworn to protect the truth concerning what actually happened? Others at Roswell and Fort Worth were ordered not to discuss it, or ever bring it up again. Ed Reese, in charge of the now declassified Project Blue Book files at the National Archives, told us that he too was surprised that Roswell is not included in the Blue Book system with all other explained reports. Why is the most highly publicized UFO case of all time strangely absent?

Neighbors of Mac Brazel, including Loretta Proctor and her son Norris, reported that Brazel returned from his detention driving a new pick-up truck. According to Norris Proctor, Brazel, who had been "dirt poor," suddenly had money to buy a new house in Tularosa, a meat locker in Las Cruces, and property in Colorado. Robert Wolf, also a good friend of Brazel, recounted how he observed him with a new truck at the Mitchell Feed and Granary in Roswell within months of the incident. Was Brazel paid the reward for the physical evidence of a flying saucer?

The daughter of Melvin Brown reported that her father, who had seen the bodies the day they were recovered, along with the MPs at the crash site, were paid off. She said that a special trust account was established in Roswell for the guards. Why would there be payoffs to maintain secrecy of a weather balloon? A handwritten note with the account number was supplied by Brown just days before he died. Attempts to locate such a fund have been unsuccessful.

There are two, possibly three sites involved with the crash at Roswell. First is the debris field. Thirty miles to the southeast where the remains of the craft and crew were located is the second. A few miles to the northwest of the debris site was apparently a touchdown point of baked soil and fused sand, which was first seen by Chaves County deputies and then by Lewis R. Rickett and Dr. Lincoln LaPaz. How is it possible that a balloon and array train could be responsible for sites such as these?

Pieces of small wreckage Brazel's son Bill Jr. had managed to collect were confiscated by the military in 1949. Why was the military still monitoring the situation two years later? This was almost two years after Mogul had been declassified. Why were search teams still dispatched from the base at Roswell through the end of 1947, through 1948, and into 1949 to recover remaining debris at the sites specifically after heavy rainfalls as described by Major Charles McGee?

If the Roswell device was nothing more than a weather balloon, why bring in LaPaz, a noted expert in the discovery and recovery of meteorites? LaPaz had worked on dozens of classified government projects, including the ultra-classified Manhattan Project. If it was nothing more unusual than a balloon, why would the Pentagon assign him to determine the speed and trajectory of the downed device two months after the crash?

In 1952, Major Ellis Boldra, an engineer stationed at Roswell, discovered a one-foot-square section of debris locked in a safe in the engineering office. It displayed the same extraordinary characteristics described by 1947 witnesses

including the memory capabilities. Why did Washington D.C. dispatch a special courier to retrieve the material immediately after news leaked out about its discovery in Roswell?

At our request, retired Navy Seal officer Charles Mascovich submitted the names and documented series numbers of over two dozen military personnel stationed at Roswell in July 1947 to both the Defense Department and the Veteran's Administration for further confirmation of military service. The list included Charles E. Hanshaw, James W. Hundley, William J. Cardell, Lee J. Mulliner, Melvin E. Brown, Ernest O. Powell, Clyde M. Robertson, Cecil T. Yoakum, Harold T. Hastings, Edward M. Sager, and Donald E. Carroll. Why does neither the Defense Department nor the Veteran's Administration have records of any of these men when we can document that each served at the Roswell Army Air Field?

If there was nothing to the Roswell case other than a misidentification of a weather balloon, why have witnesses, on their deathbeds, denied that? Melvin E. Brown spent the last four days of his life telling his family that it wasn't a weather balloon. Why was the dying archaeologist/geologist at St. Petersburg Hospital in Florida telling the nurses she had seen the bodies and then warning them about government reprisal? Roswell base Provost Marshal Edwin Easley, base Adjutant Patrick Saunders, and 393 Squadron pilot O.W. "Pappy" Henderson also gave deathbed testimony confirming the "flying saucer" crash and the recovery of bodies. And there are others more recent.

The unusual qualities of the material described to date by two dozen known eyewitnesses are consistent in every detail. In appearance, tensile strength, apparent weightlessness, memory characteristics, uninterpretable symbology, fiber-optic and plastic-like, metallic composition, its physical make-up would be difficult to duplicate even by today's standards. Why do none of the first-hand witnesses describe common materials from a weather balloon? And more importantly, why were none of these individuals interviewed by the Air Force for their 1994 Roswell Report?

In an unprecedented reaction by then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, why did he refuse to respond to three separate letters of request for the release of the Roswell files from Congressman Steve Shiff of New Mexico in 1993? Why did Congressman Shiff also receive denials from the Air Force, the Pentagon, and the National Security Council for similar requests?

And if Mogul was as highly classified as the Air Force maintains, which evidently led to the misidentification in Roswell, how is it that they invited the press to photograph this missing, top-secret balloon in Ramey's office and promote the publication of seven different pictures in practically every major newspaper throughout the country? And why would they blow the entire project (with pictures) in the Alamogordo News of July 10, 1947? Concerning the 1997 Air Force book titled Roswell Report—Case Closed that proposed the "crash dummy" explanation, given that the very earliest such tests took place six years after the 1947 incident, why didn't the Air Force consider that none of the first-hand witnesses to the bodies remained in the service or were still in New Mexico at the time of such crash-dummy tests?

Each description of the bodies by the witnesses from Roswell is consistent. Interestingly, they do not resemble what have been commonly described by witnesses in reported UFO occupant cases as well as the alleged abduction accounts. This would tend to rule out contamination from such sources. And why were none of these witnesses ever interviewed by the Air Force for any of their recent reports?

Why would the United States military resort to gross civil-rights violations, i.e., physical intimidation and death threats to such civilians as Frankie Rowe, Tommy Thomson, Frank Joyce, Judd Roberts, Walt Whitmore Sr., Pete and Ruben Anaya, John McBoyle, and George Wilcox? And why were their threats extended to even the witness's children to insure their silence about the recovery of simply a weather balloon? Project Mogul was declassified within two days of the reported balloon explanation on July 10, 1947; still the threats continued for years after the incident.

And finally, why do retired members of the military today in 1999, years after the Air Force Project Mogul and Crash Dummy Reports, still refuse to break their oaths of secrecy concerning the Roswell incident?

Public apathy often causes an inconsistent approach to important issues. Certainly, an event such as Roswell would have profound ramifications on our way of viewing the universe and humanity's place in it. It is because of this potential impact on our lives that it deserves to be discussed openly and honestly.

It is time that government officials acknowledge their responsibility for their actions—and their failure. No one can question the rational motivation and benign intent behind withholding, at first, the truth. Until the true nature of the Roswell wreckage was identified, it was the duty of government officials and military officers to safeguard national security through whatever means they believed prudent, including absolute secrecy and denial of the facts. But they have fallen short. Absolute secrecy has not been maintained, and the complete truth must be told. No longer should half-truths, rumours, and innuendo take center stage in the public forum. The whole story must be revealed before the last of the witnesses takes it to the grave.

The facts have been presented for your consideration. Our investigation has led us to a conclusion we would present in any court of law, or, if possible, before Congress. In fact, many of our main witnesses are willing to give congressional depositions. We are confident that you, too, will demand a complete account. But without sufficient public support, this is unlikely to happen.

The Roswell case rests on a wealth of circumstantial evidence, which we have attempted to present in a scientific and objective manner. We welcome any conventional explanation for these events that disapproves, with solid evidence, what we have outlined. As evidenced in the past, we have time and time again demonstrated our willingness to thoroughly examine such alternative possibilities. We also believe that we have exhausted all such solutions to the event.

However, until such proof is forthcoming, we will continue to present the facts as we have discovered them. We will continue to believe that Roswell represents the recovery of an unidentified flying object by the United States government. This conclusion is supported legally by the "preponderance of evidence" doctrine and scientifically by "Occam's Law" of parsimony. To paraphrase the old Sherlock Holmes axiom, "when all possible explanations have been ruled out, whatever remains, however impossible, must be the truth."

Sadly, the United States military maintains its official policy of stall and delay until the few remaining witnesses soon depart with the remainder of the real story. Still, it is the military who possesses the true physical evidence. Strategically, by denying the witnesses, they have attempted to bury their tracks. But fortunately for a growing number of courageous witnesses who have chosen to defy officialdom, we have a much clearer picture of what truly happened outside of Roswell, New Mexico on that stormy night of July 4, 1947.

Let us not forget that the "secret keepers" are now up to their fourth official explanation. Ironically, as a Pentagon spokesman addressed media questions following the "crash dummy" press conference in June 1997, when asked what the military response would be should the public not accept their latest Roswell scenario. "Well, then I'm afraid we'll be here again in ten years offering another explanation." To quote the late Beatle, John Lennon, "Just give me some truth."

The Cold War's Classified Skyhook Program

A Participant's Revelations

Classified high-altitude, long-duration flights of huge Skyhook balloons, which often returned their secret payloads to the surface, began in 1947 and continued for several decades. This secret Cold War program was the likely progenitor of many key aspects of UFO mythology.

B.D. Gildenberg

I was busy calibrating instrumentation for top-secret Project Mogul in the spring of 1947. In retrospect, I was totally unaware of the project's actual identity. My security clearance was for the lower rating of confidential. I was unaware of the project title for another forty-eight years, until 1995.

Welcome to the arcane world of classified Skyhook programs and Cold War intrigue. In this review, I hope to reveal many of those once-classified programs, how they generated UFO mythology, and why that relationship has not been fully addressed.

I write from a thirty-five-year professional career as a Skyhook balloon specialist and direct experience with most of the programs in these revelations. I was also an investigator for a special Project Blue Office and years later worked on the Pentagon Roswell report.

A Skyhook balloon provides constant-level performance at a predetermined altitude. It is usually constructed of special plastics and can lift tons of payload for durations of days or longer. The latter capability was once highly classified. Skyhook balloons were huge. The average size of those discussed in this article was double the six million cubic feet of the Hindenberg. Their diameters were about 300 feet with a flaccid length of 430 feet. Primarily cruising in the stratosphere, the balloons change color at high altitudes during sunrises and sunsets, while the Earth below is almost dark. These characteristics equate to a superb UFO generator.

It is therefore more than a coincidence that the birth of this vehicle in 1947 coincided with the origin of the twentieth century UFO epidemic. That epidemic was highlighted by the Roswell incident, with Project Mogul the prime seed. That relationship has already been detailed in a number of Skeptical Inquirer articles (for example, Thomas 1995).

The Skyhook Program

The prime launch site for Project Mogul was Alamogordo Air Base in New Mexico, west and therefore upwind of Roswell. The 1947 launches were in June and July, but there were initial UFO reports around the East Coast prior to the summer (Brookesmith 1995). These were preliminary test launches from New Jersey and Long Island.

There were also sightings in the summer of 1947 in the western and north-western United States. A 1949 Air Force investigation (Trakowski 1949) could not correlate those sightings with Project Mogul, but the Air Force was unaware of a Navy program launching cluster balloons in Colorado that same summer. Coordination between branches of the military was limited in the years just following World War II. Accordingly, the dilemma of that 1949 report added fuel to a developing UFO mythology.

Clusters of weather balloons launched from both New Mexico and Colorado triggered reports of flying saucers sighted in formations throughout the West. They briefly preceded plastic Skyhook balloons, but their performance as constant-level vehicles was marginal.

An initial government cover-up for Project Mogul saw an assembled crew not associated with the project launching a similar configuration, but without the classified payload. Newspapers were invited to the launch again at Alamogordo Air Base. Years later, as the Roswell legend resurfaced, UFO proponents denounced Project Mogul as a cover-up for their alien event.

At Alamogordo AFB headquarters, Mogul was listed as a guided-missile program. That represented a further cover-up procedure. The actual purpose of the project was stratospheric detection of distant nuclear bomb tests. Unknown to Roswell enthusiasts were classified programs that operated for decades afterward, based on Project Mogul technology.

One unclassified derivative was Project Blue Book, the Air Force investigation of UFOs. An initial sponsor was the Air Material Command, headquarters for Project Mogul. Blue Book originated in January, 1948, under the title Project Sign. Project Mogul prompted the initial development of a USAF Skyhook facility at Alamogordo AFB (today Holloman AFB). It was eventually governed by the Cambridge Research Laboratories in Massachusetts and became the prime USAF Skyhook launch site, still active today. Project Blue Book had outlying reporting offices throughout the country. Their function was to gather UFO reports and send them to the Blue Book main office at Wright Field, Ohio.

At Holloman AFB, the Blue Book office was situated in our Skyhook Balloon building. That choice was biased by the significant percent of reports generated by our relatively new vehicle. This office was also unique in that it, like the Wright Field Center, analyzed reports. I joined the Holloman Skyhook group in 1951 for a thirty-year tour and immediately became involved with Project Blue Book.

There was a more discrete reason for this special Blue Book role. In 1951, we became the primary center for unclassified Project Moby Dick. In at least one pro-Roswell book that project was erroneously dated 1947 and classified as secret (Randle 1994). Such misinformation contributes to the mythology of government cover-ups.

Rumours and Cover-ups

Project Moby Dick's stated purpose was to study stratosphere wind trajectories, as defined via three-day Skyhook flights. After training for over a year at our location, crews and equipment moved to three West Coast sites for the operational phase. Although the announced purpose did result in final reports containing those stratospheric trajectories, there was actually a secretive phase. Moby Dick was in fact a cover-up for top-secret project WS-119L.

Beside the alphanumeric title, secret projects have secret names that vary for different phases. This program was called Project Gopher at our Alamogordo

AFB launch site. It later accumulated titles including Grayback, Moby Dick Hi, Gentrix, and Grandson.

Even the WS prefix was a cover-up, since it was not a weapon system. The actual project goal was balloon reconnaissance of the Soviet Union. The entire subject is extensively covered in an excellent book by historian Curtis Peebles (Peebles 1991). Project Moby Dick was actually gathering trajectory data for Project Gopher, although the information also generated unclassified data for meteorological applications.

We flew five Gopher (WS-119L) test flights in 1951 and 1952 from our Air Force Skyhook Center. The payload was kept in a hanger during flight preparation under continuous armed guard. Outsiders noticed this and ensuing rumors eventually generated tales including a secret Project Aquarius. In Randle's UFO Casebook (Randle 1989) he notes, "a possible Project Aquarius; Headquarters may be in Alamogordo with an important Branch in Montana." In fact, we did have an auxiliary training camp in Montana. The mythology of Project Aquarius is nebulous but has something to do with an MJ-12 committee maintaining communications with Roswell aliens.

All this intrigue came to a head when the CIA suddenly showed up at our office and at launches. UFO reports peaked in 1952, as our local Skyhook activity increased from ninety-two hours the previous year to 694 hours aloft. Moreover, launches from the Moby Dick West Coast sites were commencing. Eventually they, along with additional sites in Missouri and Georgia, contributed 640 flights.

The CIA requested that we not identify most of those sharply increasing Skyhook reports. The strategy was to generate a UFO outbreak over the USA extending to the USSR when our WS-119L Skyhooks arrived there. Ironically, the ploy initially worked, since the Soviet Air Force could not intercept the first wave. They allowed their public to play our UFO game. The strategy ended after a few leaking Skyhooks were shot down and the payloads were exhibited, along with protests, to President Eisenhower.

Thus, complex interplay of Moby Dick, WS-119L, and UFO reports defined the unique role of our Blue Book office in that era. Since top-secret WS-119L was not declassified until more than thirty years later, that intrigue can only now be addressed.

Although initial phases of WS-119L were launched from Europe and Turkey, a final phase, WS-461L, was launched from the Pacific. There was a direct parallel to Moby Dick, where unclassified Project White Cloud launched Pacific flights to obtain trajectory data for WS-461L. In the April 1994 issue of Omni magazine, a retired airman proclaimed solid proof of UFO activity. He had glimpsed logs from the European NATO Command Center for 1958. They reported UFOs coming out of the USSR at 100,000 foot altitudes. That nicely described WS-461L flights cruising in from the Pacific Ocean launches.

The entire Skyhook reconnaissance program produced marginal data, but its recovery techniques phased into satellite programs. Moreover, the Soviets were so impressed they actually developed several high-altitude aircraft dedicated to intercepting our Skyhooks! In the 1960s, Premier Khrushchev developed a habit of banging his shoe on the table in protest at the UN. In one such case, he exhibited a WS-119L payload, perhaps with some of our trainees' initials on it.



Pre-flight preparation of four-ton reconnaissance camera launched by a Skyhook balloon.

Late in 1952, I spent a month at Edwards AFB, California, to forecast three-day trajectories for Moby Dick flights, as specified in my travel orders. Forty years later, I discovered from Peebles's *The Moby Dick Project* (Peebles 1991) that I actually had been working on a top-secret program called Flying Cloud, WS-124A!

Skyhooks were to be evaluated as a balloon bomber in the event of an actual war. Proposed payloads included nuclear warheads, but the program was abandoned as intercontinental ballistic missiles became viable.

UFO Mythology

There were a number of peripheral events associated with these programs. At Alamogordo AFB in 1952, we dispatched F-86 jet aircraft to see if they could intercept our Skyhooks at various altitudes. The exercise was designed to evaluate what Soviet interceptors might experience when our reconnaissance balloons arrived. The event was described in Timothy Good's *Above Top Secret* (Good 1988), published thirty-six years later. It represents a classic example of how portrayals of classified military testing can become transformed over decades into something out of this world. Date and aircraft type were correct but the latter were described as trying to intercept an evasive UFO that featured hovering and accelerations up to 700 mph.

Alamogordo Air Force Base was renamed Holloman AFB in 1953. On October 27 of that year, we launched an unclassified payload. It failed to terminate at the scheduled twelve-hour flight duration, and, six days later, it was detected by the Royal Air Force over the Atlantic headed for London! This of course generated UFO hysteria (Good 1988). Newspapers announced it could not be a Skyhook since there was presently no such activity in Europe, but altitude and performance reports agreed with our vehicle's capabilities. Ironically, British intelligence officers also knew that but would not disclose the object's identity. They too were involved with the WS-119L program, and test flights were to be launched from Scotland. Yet this incident is still highlighted in UFO literature as a classic case for their cause.

We flew a few classified programs in the late 1950s and 1960s, which included special flares at night from twenty-mile altitudes. That was a predictable UFO generator.

Philip Corso's book *The Day after Roswell* (Corso 1997) contained many significant errors including movements of some of Wernher von Braun's German scientists, who shared our building at Holloman AFB. Sixty pages were dedicated to a once-secret U.S. Army project for a lunar base called Project Horizon. Plans were initiated in 1959 but were finally cancelled because Project Apollo had exhausted space funds. The story was suspiciously infused with hints of alien activity on the Moon. That was interesting because that same year my Skyhook Center was flying a classified Army project, code named . . . Project Horizon! It had nothing to do with lunar bases and involved photographic studies of the horizon. The purpose was to obtain calibration information for guided missiles.

In 1967 and 1969, we flew ever more advanced, classified reconnaissance cameras. These cameras were huge, weighing from 6,000 to 8,000 pounds, and encased in ten-foot cylinders. They were tracked by several helicopters carrying armed military police to surround the payload after landing. With Roswell often downwind, this very likely contributed to that UFO story line, and time compaction is a vital ingredient in creating such myths and legends.

Skyhook incidents near to or on the ground, like this previous case, provoked more UFO tales than balloons at an altitude. There was a cluster of this type of event in the 1960s (Peebles 1994), which evoked much media coverage. It persists today as a hallmark UFO case, and features the most detailed witness descriptions.

One of those events had serious overtones, involving sensitive military sites, with no obvious revelations to this date. It is noted in Good's book, *Above Top Secret* (Good 1988). "A metallic disc-shaped UFO with bright flashing lights moving slowly over the site. It stopped and hovered at 500 feet then the UFO climbed vertically and disappeared at high speed" (this was in March, 1967). The location was a Minuteman missile site at Minot, North Dakota. I became suspicious after reading this, aware of a top-secret Skyhook program in that

era, with one launch site in the Dakotas. There were other descriptions that rather precisely identified the program, despite scattered inclusions of media mythology.

The program was Project Grab Bag, also called Sky Dipper or Cold Ash. Again, there was a cover-up unclassified program, Program Ash Can. Both programs involved sampling radioactive fallout debris in the stratosphere. After a brief Navy test sequence, Grab Bag, now under the USAF, became operational in 1956, extending briefly into the 1970s. Its highly classified signature was due to the fact that a final product involved establishing details of Soviet plutonium production. Even our Project Ash Can attracted more than the usual Skyhook attention, since parachute and payload were snatched in midair by USAF cargo aircraft. That prompted stories of aircraft being attacked by a UFO while the mother ship (the Skyhook) hovered high above.

Grab Bag was a special UFO generator. After stratospheric sampling, lifting gas was partially released through a valve in the apex of the Skyhook. The entire ensemble was thus lowered to within a few thousand feet of the ground. Then it released a parachute with the payload while the under-loaded balloon rocketed upward to eventually shatter. Since most of these activities occurred at night, Grab Bag generated probably the most detailed UFO events in the literature. For instance, "A conical shaped object descended from the sky. It hovered at an estimated 3,000 feet. A smaller UFO landed within fifty feet" (Brookesmith 1995).

That is a precise description of the basic Grab Bag profile. The Minuteman case with a UFO climbing vertically to disappear at high speed sounds very much like the under-loaded balloon zooming skyward to disappear as it self-destructed.

Project tracking included three helicopters. If the winds were light, the entire ensemble would be valved to the surface. Again, UFO reports clearly identified the process. "Floating red lights which moved over a highway and into a field at night. It appeared like a two-story building, with other lights grouped around it. The latter sometimes hover around the central object" (Fawcett and Greenwood 1984).

The payload did indeed have red lights. The other hovering lights were the helicopters. Just before landing the sample would be transferred to another container via a powerful centrifugal blower. That noise amplified the mystery. Occasionally the tracking crew would transfer the sample into metal cylinders, engendering even more strange noises in the dark. Other activity was also reported: "Radiation fields and other forms of energy have appeared to be directly connected with a hovering or landed UFO" (Brookesmith 1995). The radioactivity, although slight, was from the sample being transferred by recovery personnel to another container.

Readers may wonder why, after recovery, Grab Bag personnel would not have notified local authorities without disclosing classification. The answer is that proceedings were so classified that they could not identify their mission under any circumstance. The program was a natural for engendering mystery and a treasury of lucrative narratives for UFO folklore.

Meanwhile, at our Holloman AFB Skyhook Center, we continued to launch a variety of classified reconnaissance cameras, now with loads up to five tons. Again, there were tracking helicopters with armed military police (MPs). People in southern New Mexico were used to seeing military helicopters on various missions. However, we flew a number of reconnaissance camera missions in 1975 in north-eastern New Mexico where military helicopters were seldom seen. This created some suspicion. "Unidentified helicopters" had also helped to amplify Grab Bag as a UFO generator, triggering later myths involving military helicopters.

There was an outbreak of mutilated cattle stories in Colorado and north-eastern New Mexico in 1975. Strange helicopters were part of the scenario. The Albuquerque Journal reported "ghost copters" buzzing ranches (Peebles 1994). The presence of armed MPs onboard added to the frenzy. The FAA Area Coordinator announced an investigation of this outbreak but never revealed what it had found. The FBI also became involved with similar results. Both agencies had quickly discovered it was our highly classified program. Their "case closed" reaction is still highlighted today in government cover-up tales.

Clearly, secret Skyhook balloon programs magnified government cover-ups and engendered numerous UFO stories, sightings, and myths. Classified aircraft also contributed to UFO folklore during the Cold War. The U-2 reconnaissance aircraft followed WS-119L operations over the USSR. It triggered similar UFO reports, even while training in the U.S. However, unlike supersonic aircraft, Skyhooks remained within sight for long durations, landing with strange payloads, far from their origin.

It is important that all this activity be revealed. Project Grab Bag generated the most detailed descriptions of UFOs in the literature. Even relatively skeptical individuals might have wondered about those sightings, believing them to be too complex to dismiss. I hope these revelations provide a vital insight into what was "behind the looking glass" of secret Cold War activities.

The Pentagon published the first two detailed reports in 1995 (Weaver and McAndrew 1995), demonstrating how top-secret Project Mogul became the initial trigger for the Roswell mystery. Readers may wonder why that effort has not been repeated for once-classified events detailed in this article. Actually, it was only at the urging of a congressman, the late Steve Schiff of New Mexico, that the Pentagon began work on the Roswell affair. Having participated in the preparation of the final report (McAndrew 1997), I can reveal there was substantial resistance to the whole process. A number of times we thought the enterprise would be cancelled. It was only via last-minute intervention by the

Secretary of the Air Force that the report was finally published. Many Pentagon authorities believed that the Roswell and UFO investigations in general were not worthy of distraction from more pressing matters of national importance.

Despite providing accurate hardware descriptions of the programs we have covered, some reports included stories of onboard aliens and other typical elements of UFO mythology such as stalled cars and skin burns. They were imitating numerous UFO witnesses with a tendency to repeat stories that preceded their own sightings.

We can deplore or marvel at the persistent thirst for otherworldly fantasies, but a sage in Elizabethan England had an apt comment that can categorize even contemporary mythology:

So full of shapes is fancy, that it alone is high
fantastical.

- Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Scene 1

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About the Author

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Crop Circle

CROP CIRCLE NEWS

Crop Circle in Britain - 1955

Early Crop Circle Account Surfaces

Dateline: Thursday, June 17, 2004

By: NICK REDFERN

Stone Forest Editor, Phenomena magazine

Writing regular weekly columns for Stone Forest is an illuminating experience - and so is the feedback that the column generates. I guess the one thing that continues to both fascinate and amaze me is the sheer scale of encounters, stories and accounts that people have to relate to us that fall into the Stone Forest category - and on a global scale too. I do not exaggerate when I say that we are currently receiving around 20 telephone calls, letters and emails per week from people with intriguing material on the subjects of cryptozoology, stone circles and the crop circle mystery. And it is this latter subject that I want to focus on for you this week.

Several weeks ago, I revealed that the British Government's domestic intelligence service, MI5, had investigated unusual crop circle-style formations found within the UK at the height of the Second World War. The declassified files on the affair demonstrated that MI5 had addressed the possibility that the patterns in the fields were possibly evidence of some form of "coded messages" created by Nazi spies operating within Britain and were designed to

relay secret bombing mission data to German pilots flying overhead.

But aside from the startling fact that the files in question confirmed official interest in the crop circle mystery at the highest level of the British intelligence services, there is the equally important fact that the files demonstrated that the crop circle mystery is not a relatively new one - as many skeptics of the phenomenon would have us believe. And it was this aspect of the story that prompted Alec Randall of Wiltshire, England to contact us about a bizarre incident that occurred to him in the summer of 1955.

Randall was born in the city of Bath, England in 1938 and is a retired manager of a men's clothes shop. However, it is with regard to an experience that Randall had in the summer of 1955 that this issue of Stone Forest is concerned.

Randall wrote to tell us that he had a girlfriend at the time named Sheila who lived in Devizes, Wiltshire and that while strolling down a particular road that runs adjacent to one of the many cornfields that dominate the Devizes countryside at approximately 11 O'clock on an August morning, the couple heard a curious humming noise not unlike an electrical generator.

Realizing that the sound was coming from the field to their right, they stopped and looked in the general direction in which the sound appeared to be mainly concentrated. To their surprise and amazement, only about 15 feet into the field they could see what looked like a square-shaped "distortion of the air, like a thick haze of heat" above the corn and at a height of about 20 feet.

They watched for about 2 minutes as the odd haze seemed to hang in the air; then, suddenly, there was a loud "cracking noise like an electric shock noise - an electrical bang." The mysterious haze was gone, but beneath it in the field was a small circle that was easily recognizable from their close proximity. The young couple climbed a small wooden fence and walked carefully over to the field.

Randall states that the circle was only about 8 feet in diameter, but that it was a perfect circle and the corn was laid down in a "beautiful swirl but with a smell of burning metal in the air which lasted for a few minutes or until we got used to it." Randall adds: "We stayed there for about 20 minutes, I suppose, then went home."

Randall states that his reason for getting in touch was because of the publicity surrounding the MI5 files on similar formations found during the Second World War.

"I've followed the circle things since the 80s and because of my sighting," states Randall. "But to know that there were others who had seen them before me was good to know. I hope this interests you." It certainly does and we thank both Alec Randall and all our readers for sharing their experiences with us -

experiences that we will continue to report on in Stone Forest

Apocalypse now and forever

Sunday, June 20, 2004

By Dennis Roddy

In David Booth's dream, he is watching Earth from outer space when a stray planet wedges itself between the South Pole and the moon.

"Then I see a gigantic explosion in the western part of the North American continent. That explosion billows up and then there's this gray cloud. You can see orange, like fire, inside of it. And then there's a ripple that goes across the face of the Earth," Booth said.

This foretelling of cataclysm was received with great appreciation by believers in strange science when Booth announced it last year. Booth was, after all, a visionary with a record. In 1979 he had 10 days of dreams in which an American Airlines flight turned over and nosed into a ball of flame at an airport. He took this matter to the FAA. They made a note. Three days later, American Airlines Flight 191 lost an engine, turned over and nosed into a ball of flame at a Chicago airport, killing 274 people. Booth was interviewed, then dodged publicity. Six years later, he did a network news show and was horrified at the reaction.

"There was a church group down in North Carolina that said I was some kind of Messiah figure and trying to make me into something I was not," Booth said. "Everybody wanted a piece of me."

In March of last year, the second cycle of dreams began, the one in which not a plane, but the Earth, crashes in flames. Booth told a neighbor, Wayne Green, a magazine publisher and conspiracy talk show regular whose catalog includes such titles as "Cold Fusion" and "Moondoggle: Apollo Hoax Expose." Green told Booth they needed to get the word out. Booth threw together a book and hit the alternative-science talk show circuit.

But within weeks of his emergence, skeptics attacked Booth. Some accused him of plagiarizing material for his book, "Code Red: The Coming Destruction of the United States, 2004."

Radio talker George Noory threw Booth off the show three months ago for not revealing the contents of a conversation he said he had with one of the

visionaries of Fatima. Adherents still believed destruction is coming, even consider his prophecy real, but left the messenger empty and disillusioned, his message consumed and the husk thrown away. Booth, a reluctant prophet, wishes he'd stayed clear of the community of apocalyptic.

"I've regretted it ever since. It's worse than politics," Booth said. "It's a brutal space."

Booth went home to his organic farm in New Hampshire and planted his crops like a man expecting the planet to be here next season. The two underground shelters on his property stand ready but, for now, are used for storage and mushroom growing.

"Is it gonna happen? I have no idea," he said. "Why me out of everybody? I haven't the slightest idea."



So there it is: A huge fight has broken out over the end of the world. Some matters might be reliably expected to take care of themselves. But Bloom is a victim of the insatiable demand for some sort of special knowledge.

According to cult expert David Frankfurter of the University of New Hampshire, many find emotional nourishment in the knowing something others don't, even if what they know is crazy. In their world, Booth's dream is not inexplicable. It is merely in need of decoding.

"For many people who feel somewhat disenfranchised by the system, anticipating that cataclysm becomes a real preoccupation. You get the pleasure of knowing something that other people don't -- of being in tune with a higher truth," Frankfurter said.

This higher truth has a wide following. One of the top-rated programs on the Premier Radio network, after Rush Limbaugh, is "Coast to Coast," a late-night program that features seers, UFO aficionados, psychics and practitioners of weird science.

While much popular apocalypse literature is based in the spiritual, such as the popular (if extra-Scriptural) "Left Behind" series, a growing body now ties itself to a stewpot of scientific ideas.

Some have adopted the theories of Immanuel Velikovsky, who tied ancient accounts of plagues to astronomy in his 1950 book "Worlds in Collision." His idea was that a comet grazed the earth, setting off a cataclysm, then joined the orbit of the solar system as the planet Venus.

Many subscribe to the theory of "Planet X." That planet presumably is coursing through the galaxy, nearing our orbit, and will cause the poles to shift, creating havoc.

Some, such as James McCanney, a onetime instructor of physics at Cornell University, have amalgamated an assortment of theories that pretty well capture the worldview of conspiracy and cult science that characterize the end-of-the-world crowd. McCanney routinely asserts that the moon landings were faked, that comets turn into planets, that Planet X is coming and, in one posting on his Web site, that the government has broken in on his telephone linkup to "Coast to Coast" (he is a frequent guest) to cut him off.

Others mix apocalyptic science with spiritualism. Red Elk, a Native American time traveler, is an elder of the Inner Hayoka Society. He is predicting massive volcanic eruptions, both on Mt. Si, in Washington State ("it told me it was going to blow up in two years," he explained) and Mt. St. Helen's, again.

"The big thing is that it will lead to Armageddon," Red Elk said. The Earth will flip three times. "It will make three big jerks to where Sweden will end up being the South Pole."

As with other theories, Yellowstone often becomes the focus of prediction. The park sits atop what is now referred to as a "supervolcano," a wide swath of molten rock that heats the famous geysers and sometimes emits gasses that occasionally kill passing wildlife.

Every year, Jake Lowenstern, a geologist who runs the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory, deals with predictions that the place is about to blow.

"Sometimes they'll provide us with concrete dates. Happily, those have passed," Lowenstern said. Yellowstone has, of course, been the site of huge volcanic eruptions, which is why it is there, and why it sits in a huge, sunken area called a caldera. Its most recent volcanic eruption was 70,000 years ago, "and that was a lava flow."

Advised of David Booth's dream of earthly annihilation, Lowenstern did not sound like a man heading for shelter.

"All of these sorts of events are possible," Lowenstern said. "The bigger the eruption the less likely it is to occur. But they're all theoretically possible and that gives the catastrophe theorists hope."

David Booth, however, does not speak like a man hoping for destruction. He recently resumed talking with Wayne Green.

"And we were really good friends," said Green. "I think he was afraid." Green said Booth told him that while in France three months ago, waiting for his meeting with the Fatima mystic, federal agents confronted him and warned him to stop frightening people. Booth won't discuss that matter today.

What he talks about is the incredible mishmash of ideas that has come together in a world filled with people awaiting destruction, convinced of conspiracy and distrustful of everything. He knows he is among them. He believes, for instance, that Pope John Paul I, who died after a month in office in 1978, was murdered. He believes that American ships are out at sea to avoid the coming catastrophe and that the government is feeding the hysteria. Go to the Department of Homeland Security's Web site and the Federal Emergency Management Administration, where how to prepare for and deal with cataclysmic attacks, natural and biological, is outlined in scary detail.

"These are the duct tape people," Booth said. "If you want to talk about the purveyors of apocalyptic visions of the future, don't go to the Internet. Go to our government."

It is not the stuff of pleasant dreams, which raises the question of what David Booth, who already regrets sharing his latest with the world, will do in the event of another.

"I have no idea," he said. "You know what I'm going to do right now? I'm going to go out and finish watering my garden."

Sometimes a man must guard against the possibility something horrible will not happen.

From: Bob Huff. Message posted to UFO Updates

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Subject: Recruiting For Covert Agencies like MJ-12

I recently met an individual who was recruited in the early 80's for a covert Government Agency. I thought the process may be illustrative of similar methods and means used by government-UFO organizations.

The Study:

The individual was attending a university in the mid-west in the mid-70s. During the individual's junior year, the University staff solicited the individual and several others to participate in a psychological study. An outside company, not the University, conducted a series of psychological, behavioral, and intelligence tests. Upon completion, each participant was paid anywhere from \$20 to \$250 depending how far each progressed in the testing.

After the testing, the testing group informally gathered and in the course of their discussion they concluded that they were subject of a study by an intelligence agency. They could only speculate on its purpose.

The Recruitment:

In early 80s, a Mr. 'Adams' from the CIA telephonically contacted and asked if the individual was interest in interviewing for a sensitive government position. Mr. Adams said that because of the high test scores, the individual was being approached. The individual was now about 25 years old.

The individual accepted the invitation. Along with 11 others, the individual arrived at <?xml:namespace prefix = st1 ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:smarttags" />Dulles Airport and were transported by car to CIA HQs. The group was composed of mostly men from different parts of the country. None knew the other.

At Langley, escorted by two Army captains, they boarded a commercial bus. After boarding the bus, each person was outfitted with a headset and was instructed to carefully listen to its content. The instructions were a continuous stream of directives to observe certain events and retain observations of certain people and places. The interior of the bus also contained video cameras to monitor and record the recruits.

The bus crossed from Virginia into Maryland and traveled for about an hour and a half. Upon its arrival, presumably at Ft Meade [NSA headquarters], the group disembarked and was escorted pass several guarded checkpoints in a secure facility.

The Testing:

The group was escorted to a large room containing numerous computer terminals. It appeared to be an operations center of some sort.

Their greeters explained that because of their extraordinary test scores that the group would be tested over the next two days to further identify their special capabilities.

Testing was intensive and continuous. Some tests involved viewing garbled messages and translating them. Other tests involved viewing different types of imagery. At the end of each day, the individuals retired to provided rooms. The rooms were simple but complete. But none provided windows. The tests were completed in complete isolation from the outside world.

The Pitch:

The individual I spoke with again scored exceedingly well. On the third day, the individual was met by four men. They commended the individual on the test scores and offered a job. The job was with a secret government agency independent of both the CIA and NSA. The individual, undercover in a commercial company and with a small team of two to three people, would

conduct a variety of covert actions. The actions would include break-ins, code breaking and other spy craft. The individual was told that the job would be an entry into an 'unimaginable world'.

The Answer:

The individual was given a week to consider the offer. For a variety of personal reasons the individual said 'No'.

Of Possible Interest to this List:

On several occasions, I have met people who were familiar with MJ-12 operating procedures. They indicated the agency has a means of identifying potential candidates and recruiting them.

The process also reaffirms the contention that 'you don't join MJ-12; they find you'. I believe the above identifies these mechanisms.

Also of particular interest, is that the above individual after this interview became aware of MJ-12 and its alien mission. The time was well before the 1987 release of the 'MJ-12 Documents'.

Twisting The Light Away

New Scientist

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A novel trick with light has got physicists in a spin. Pitch your photon like a corkscrewing curveball and you can push bandwidth through the roof, flummox eavesdroppers and perhaps even talk to aliens. Stephen Battersby investigates.

IT DOESN'T look like much, just a plain box about half a metre long. Nonetheless, this is the prototype of something with seemingly magical properties. Fire a beam of its laser light at the dust sitting on your tabletop and the dust motes will begin to dance around in circles.

Fair enough, that's not quite a killer application. But before Miles Padgett and his team at the University of Glasgow in the UK built this device, they weren't exactly sure what it would be used for - their plan was to invite industrialists to see it in action, and wait for the reaction and some suggestions. Without a working model, though, no one would take them seriously. "If you say to people, there's a device we haven't built yet, based on untried technology, using

physics you've never heard of, but I assure you it's going to work...well, it's much better to demonstrate it to them."

So they built it and demonstrated it, and now the applications have become clear - and sought after. This box is the prototype for what could prove a revolutionary, high-security communications technology. Revolutionary to us, that is. Alien civilisations may be using it already.

Padgett's box creates something most physicists have never even heard of, something never seen in nature. It is called twisted light.

The energy of ordinary light travels in the same direction as the wave: if you could freeze an ordinary beam of laser light, you would see a neat series of waves, crest following trough following crest. Each wave crest would look a bit like a pancake face on to the direction of travel, with the pancakes slicing the beam up into sections one wavelength long.

But in a beam of twisted light the energy of each wave travels in a corkscrew path, spiralling around the beam's central axis. The crests also look completely different to those of ordinary light: they are transformed so that they merge into a corkscrew (see Graphic). If you could stand on a wave crest and walk around the beam, after one complete circuit you would find yourself standing one wavelength away from where you started.

Though twisted light might sound exotic, making it is surprisingly easy. All you need is a diffraction grating - nothing more than a set of narrow lines drawn on a transparent film. The light waves bend, or diffract, as they pass through the grating, and then interfere with each other as they emerge. For light of a particular wavelength, diffraction occurs in a way that can be easily calculated, and physicists can work out what pattern of lines they need on the grating to create a twisted beam. You can produce a single helix, a double helix like DNA, a triple one like fusilli pasta, a quadruple one, or even more. You can even alter the grating pattern to make a terrifically screwy beam with a twist of 250 or more.

Sending laser light through such a grating actually imparts twist to the individual photons - the energy-carrying particles of light - in the beam. In quantum physics terms, the photons in the beam gain orbital angular momentum (see "The quantum angle"). Unlike polarisation, which is restricted to just two states (clockwise and anticlockwise), orbital angular momentum can take on an unlimited number of possible states. And that's one reason why twisty light could prove so useful. The endless number of twist states means there is no theoretical limit to the amount of information you can send with a beam of twisted light.

Many forms of communication use binary codes - if you have a flashlight, and you need to send a message to your friend, you only have the choice between flashlight on and flashlight off. There's just one bit of information per flash. Standard optical telecoms work in a similar way, but use light pulses of several

frequencies at once to speed up the process. Even highly sophisticated quantum communication systems only encode information in one of the two polarisation states of a photon.

But a pulse of twisted light, even a single twisted photon, can hold a lot more information than that, because there are a lot more states to choose from. "With a twist of up to 26 you could choose to encode the alphabet," says Padgett. You could simply decide that a flash of single helix light means the letter A, a flash of double helix is B, and so on.

The idea of using twisted light to communicate was first raised in 2002 by Gabriel Molina-Terriza, then at the Technical University of Catalonia in Barcelona (Physical Review Letters, vol 88, p 13601). However, Molina-Terriza's team faced a practical snag: they didn't have a good way to receive a twisted light signal - to tell what twist it has. Without that, communication would be impossible.

But the solution wasn't far off. Padgett and his Glasgow group had already been using twisted light to create an "optical spanner", which is able to spin tiny components (and dust motes), and one day might be used to build microscopic machines (New Scientist, 14 February 1998, p 34). When they heard Molina-Terriza's suggestion, the team realised they could turn their twisted expertise to communication.

The heart of their prototype is a spatial light modulator (See Graphic). This is a high-resolution liquid-crystal display which can be used as a kind of controllable diffraction grating. A laser beam is blocked by the opaque pixels, and passes through the transparent pixels. Where the light passes through it is diffracted, bending the shape of the wave.

Together with Steve Barnett and his theory group at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Johannes Courtial of Padgett's team worked out what patterns were needed to give a plain laser beam any one of eight different twists. They just switched the pattern on their spatial light modulator to send a pulse of a given twist.

The receiver is slightly different. It focuses the incoming beam onto another spatial light modulator, but this one is programmed with a fixed pattern that sends each of those eight different twists out in a different direction, travelling to one of eight detectors.

Last April, Graham Gibson of the University of Glasgow began to put a prototype together, cannibalising an old air-pollution monitoring system the group had built years before. Everything went smoothly, and early this year they got it working. "We've taken it outside and used it over 30 metres or so," says Padgett.

Twisted talk

The Glasgow team are the first to harness the power of twisted light for communications. Their prototype can send light pulses with eight different twists, so a pulse carries the equivalent of three bits of information. It should easily be possible to increase that to 64 twist states, carrying six times the data of an ordinary binary channel.

So, how far could it go? "In theory, you could encode all 60,000 Chinese characters," says Padgett, "but by that point it becomes impractical." That's because the twistier the light, the more the beam loses focus and spreads as it travels. Padgett reckons the practical limit may be somewhere in the hundreds of twist states.

That still makes it an enticing prospect for carrying data at unprecedented rates. At the moment, there's not much call for beaming optical messages through free space. Fibres are another matter. If you could send twisted light down the existing optical-fibre network, its greater bandwidth could carry extra movie channels, or even allow more futuristic, data-hungry applications such as online 3D virtual reality. There's just one small problem: twisted light is not compatible with today's optical fibres. "If it were, I'd have retired to the south of France on a yacht by now," says Padgett. The problem is that if you stress the fibre at all, even by bending it round a corner, it changes the twist.

However, it should eventually be possible to design fibres that can safely carry twisted light. Padgett thinks that multi-cored fibres might be an answer - a fibre with 16 separate cores might be able to carry twists of up to 16 without scrambling them. But for now that's just a guess: he doesn't know exactly how you would need to arrange the cores, or whether it would work. Meanwhile, a team led by Alexander Volyar at Tavrichesky National University in Ukraine is working on physically twisting fibres to accommodate twisted light.

Another magical property of twisted light may prove valuable before that. It offers a whole new approach to secure communications - an approach that is already provoking interest. In February, a commercial organisation approached Padgett's group with a specific application in mind. Unfortunately Padgett can't say what that is, or even name the interested party. "We have a non-disclosure agreement - including company names," he says.

Padgett will say, however, that his group has begun work on a microwave version of the device. There may be little call for free-space communication at visible wavelengths, but point-to-point microwave systems are ubiquitous, for example, carrying cell phone traffic between base stations. Because microwave beams spread out much more than optical beams, it is much easier to eavesdrop on microwave communication. You can be hundreds of metres away from the intended receiver and still pick up enough of a signal to listen in. And that's where twisted microwaves could help.

Unless you are right at the centre of the twisted beam, where you can see the whole spiral, you can't get all the information it carries. Off centre, where you only see a section of the spiral, you simply can't tell what its twist is - so you can't read the message (see "Spiralling security").

For those with enough cash and the paranoia, the security of twisted light could also be combined with the impenetrability of quantum cryptography. Quantum-cryptographic systems, which are already commercially available, establish a key via single photons fired along a fibre-optic cable. The receiver can check them for the quantum disturbances that any eavesdropper would introduce, thus guaranteeing that the key has not been intercepted.

Messages in space

Although quantum cryptography is totally secure in theory, building the actual physical set-up can introduce weaknesses that an ingenious eavesdropper could exploit (New Scientist, 29 November 2003, p 24). And data rates are very slow: commercial systems generate keys at a few hundred bits per second - not even enough to encrypt a telephone conversation. But combine quantum cryptography with the extra bandwidth of twisted light and you might boost the capacity tenfold or more, enough to make truly secure communication practical. Twisted light could well end up as a common cryptographic tool for financial institutions - perhaps for beaming sensitive information between skyscrapers - or on the battlefield.

It could also end up in space. Most satellites communicate via microwave beams, which spread widely by the time they hit the ground, making it simple to eavesdrop on an ordinary beam. Again, twisted microwaves could make the message accessible only to the intended receiver at the beam's core. Although the team haven't tested their rig over such long ranges, they say there is no reason why it shouldn't work in principle.

If we do point twisted-light detectors up to space, it's just possible that we might see more than we bargained for. Martin Harwit, emeritus professor in astronomy at Cornell University in New York, has suggested we start looking for twisted light from space as part of the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. Since no known natural phenomenon can create a coherent beam of electromagnetic radiation with, say, a six fold helix, it would stand out from the background noise of the universe as a deliberate call sign.

It certainly makes looking for ordinary radio signals seem a little backward. So, until we have mastered its use here on Earth, maybe we should pursue twisted light as a matter of pride. Perhaps talking with twists will come to be known as the mark of a truly advanced civilisation.

Spiralling security

If Alice sends Bob a twisted light beam, and Eve wants to listen in, she's going to have a hard time of it. If she's in the neighbouring office block, say, she can

only pick up one fringe of the beam. She can't see the whole pattern of wave fronts, so she won't be able to tell how twisted it is. She will get just a fraction of the information, which would be useless.

Maybe Eve could recruit some evil henchmen, and have them intercept other bits of the beam? "If they have someone right, left, below and above, they can do a better job," says Miles Padgett. But still not good enough. Eve would probably need eight listeners, dotted evenly around the edges of the beam, to be able to discern its twist reliably.

And to compare the relative phase of the different parts of the beam, which you need to do to determine its twist, the listeners have to combine the light they gather - maybe they could bounce it off mirrors to some main collecting station where it could all be recombined. They would also have to use their own laser reference beams to correct for any wobbles.

Even if this mad scheme worked, it would be easy enough for Alice to increase the range of twist states from eight to 64, say. Eve would then need to recruit several dozen spies.

Eve can't dangle a detector in the middle of the beam because Bob will notice that he's not seeing the whole beam. She could make a lightly silvered mirror, and bounce a little of the light away to the side, but it would be tricky. She would need to know just where the middle of the beam is, and somehow suspend her mirror there. And taking so little light would make it difficult to extract the twist information. Alice can make the beam quite weak, so Bob has just enough light to detect its twist. If Eve sees only a small fraction of that, analysing it could be all but impossible. "In theory it's possible to do this so delicately that the receiver doesn't know there is eavesdropping. But it would be exceptionally awkward," says Padgett.

The Quantum angle

Can even a single photon be twisted? If you think about light as a classical wave, then twisted light is like a corkscrew, with the wave fronts bent into a single or multiple helix. But it's hard to see how that makes sense for a single quantum of light, a photon. So until a few years ago, physicists thought that twist might only be a property of big beams of light.

In 1992 Les Allen of the University of St Andrews in the UK showed that twisted light carries angular momentum, like a flywheel. For singly twisted light, it works out at one quantum unit of angular momentum per photon, so Allen suggested that this "orbital angular momentum" is a property of the individual photons.

In 2001 Alois Mair, now at Harvard University, worked with Anton Zeilinger's group at the University of Vienna, Austria, to prove it. They created entangled pairs of twisted photons, and showed that the twist resides in each photon (Nature, vol 412, p 313).

A twisted photon is a curious thing. It appears to travel along a helical path, as if it is tied to some imaginary beam axis with string. If you detect it anywhere along the beam, it will seem to be coming at you from an angle - its momentum is not directed straight along the beam, but partly around the beam's axis. Of course, being a quantum object means it doesn't really move along a well-defined path at all. All you can say is how likely you are to detect it in a given spot, which gives you a spread-out quantum wave function. And what does the wave function of a twisted photon look like? Exactly like the corkscrew of classical twisted light.

Stephen Battersby
